MEDITATIONS

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING

VOL. I.	VOL. II.
MEDITATIONS among the TOMBS.	CONTEMPLATIONS on the NIGHT.
REFLECTIONS on a FLOWER-GARDEN.	CONTEMPLATIONS on the STARRY HEAVENS; and,
And, A DESCANT on CREATION.	A WINTER-PIECE.

BY *JAMES HERVEY*, A. M.
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A NEW EDITION.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by GAVIN ALSTON.
MDCCLXXIV.

TO

PAUL ORCHARD,

OF

Stoke-Abbey, in *Devonſhire*, Eſq;

Dear SIR,

AS your honoured father was pleaſed to make choice of me to anſwer in your name at the font, and to exerciſe a ſort of guardianſhip over your ſpiritual intereſts; permit me, by putting theſe little treatiſes into your hand, to fulfil ſome part of that ſolemn obligation.

Gratitude for many ſignal favours, and a *conſcientious* regard to my ſacred engagement, have long ago inſpired my breaſt with the warmeſt wiſhes, both for *your* true *dignity*, and real *happineſs*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way of advancing either the one or the other, than to ſet before you a ſketch of your excellent *father's character*.—— Illuſtrious examples are the moſt winning incitements to virtue: and none can come attended with ſuch particular recommendations to you as the pattern of that worthy perſon, from whom, under a gracious GOD, you derive your very being.

A MOST cordial and reverential *eſteem* for the *divine word*, was one of his remarkable qualities. Thoſe oracles of Heaven were his principal delight, and his inſeparable companions. Your gardens, your ſolitary walks, and the hedges of your fields, can witneſs, with what an unwearied aſſiduity he exerciſed himſelf in the

the law of the LORD. From hence he fetched his maxims of wiſdom, and formed his judgment of things. The ſacred *precepts* were the model of his tempers, and the guide of his life, while the precious *promiſes* were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

IMPROVING company was another of his moſt reliſhing pleaſures. Few gentlemen were better furniſhed, either with richneſs of fancy, or copiouſneſs of expreſſion, to bear a ſhining part in converſation. With theſe talents, he always endeavoured to give ſome uſeful, and generally ſome religious turn to the diſcourſe. Nor did he ever reflect with greater complacency, on his ſocial hours, than when they tended to glorify the eternal Majeſty; and to awaken in himſelf and others, a more lively ſenſe of devotion.

To *project* for the *good* of *others*, was his frequent *ſtudy*; and to *carry* thoſe benevolent contrivances in *execution*, his favourite *employ*. When viſited by the young perſons of the neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate them in debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous habit; it was his inceſſant aim, by finely-adapted perſuaſives, to encourage them in induſtry, and eſtabliſh them in a courſe of ſobriety; to guard them againſt the allurements of vice, and animate them with the principles of piety. A noble kind of hoſpitality this! which will probably tranſmit its beneficial influence to their earthly poſſeſſions; to their future families; and even to their everlaſting ſtate.

A CONVICTION of human indigence, and a thorough perſuaſion of the divine all-ſufficiency, induced him to be *frequent in prayer*. To proſtrate himſelf in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inacceſſible, was his glory; to implore the continuance of the almighty favour, and the increaſe of all Chriſtian graces, was his gain. In thoſe moments, no doubt, he remembered you, Sir, with a particular earneſtneſs; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of Heaven, for his

his infant-ſon. Ceaſe not to ſecond them with your own devout ſupplications, that they may deſcend upon your head, "in the fulneſs of the bleſſings of the "goſpel of peace."

To give their genuine luſtre to all his other endowments he was careful to maintain an *humble mind*. Though his friends might admire his ſuperior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he ſaw how far he fell ſhort of the mark of his high calling: ſaw, and lamented his defects: ſaw, and renounced himſelf: relying, for final acceptance, and endleſs felicity, on a better righteouſneſs than his own; even on the tranſcendently perfect righteouſneſs, and inconceivably precious death of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

THESE, Sir, are ſome of the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of your deceaſed parent. And, as you had the misfortune to loſe ſo valuable a relative, before you was capable of forming any acquaintance with his perſon; I flatter myſelf, you will the more attentively obſerve his picture. This his *moral picture*; deſigned, not to be ſet in gold, or ſparkle in enamel, but to breathe in your ſpirit, and to live in all your conduct.—Which, though it be entirely your own, calculated purely for yourſelf, may poſſibly, (like the family-pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room), make ſome pleaſing and uſeful impreſſion on every beholder.—May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch its reſemblance; and each, in his reſpective ſphere, "go and "do likewiſe."

BUT you, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent providence, has made you heir of the *affluent circumſtances*; let not a gay and thoughtleſs inadvertance, cut you off from the richer *inheritance* of theſe noble qualifications.—Theſe will be your ſecurity amidſt all the glittering

glittering dangers; which are inſeparable from blooming years, and an elevated ſituation in life. Theſe are your path, your ſure and only path, to true greatneſs, and ſolid happineſs.——Tread in theſe ſteps, and you cannot fail of being the darling of your friends, and the favourite of Heaven. Tread in theſe ſteps, and you will give inexpreſſible joy to one of the beſt of mothers; you will become an extenſive bleſſing to your fellow-creatures; and which, after ſuch moſt engaging motives, is ſcarce worthy to be mentioned, you wil be the delight, the honour, and the boaſt of,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt affectionate Godfather,

And faithful humble ſervant,

Weſton-Favel, *near*
Northampton,
July 14. 1747.

JAMES HERVEY.

PREFACE.

WE have already exerciſed our ſpeculations on the tombs and flowers; ſurveying nature covered with the deepeſt *horrors, and arrayed in the* richeſt *beauties.* Allegory *taught many of the objects to ſpeak the language of virtue; while* imagination *lent her colouring, to give the leſſons an engaging air.* —— *And this with a view of imitating that* divine Inſtructor; *who commiſſioned the* lily *, in her ſilver ſuit, to remonſtrate in the ear of unbelieving reaſon: who ſent his diſciples, (men ordained to* teach *the univerſe), to* learn *maxims of the laſt importance from the moſt* inſignificant *birds *, that* wander *through the paths of the air; from the very* meaneſt *herbs *, that are* ſcattered *over the face of the † ground.*

Emboldened

* * * Matth. vi. 26. 28. 29. 30.

† Celebrated writers, as *Demoſthenes* and *Cicero*, *Thucydides* and *Livy*, are obſerved to have a ſtile peculiar to themſelves. ——Now, whoever conſiders the diſcourſes of *Chriſt*, will find a ſtile by which he *remarkably* diſtinguiſh s himſelf, and which may *properly* be called *HIS OWN*. Majeſtic, yet familiar; happily uniting dignity with condeſcenſion; it conſiſts in teaching his followers the *ſublimeſt truths*, by ſpiritualizing on the moſt *common occurrences*: which, beſides its being level to the loweſt apprehenſions; and admirably adapted to ſteal into the moſt inattentive heart; is accompanied with this very ſingular advantage, that it turns even the *ſphere of buſineſs* into a *ſchool of inſtruction*; and renders the moſt ordinary objects a ſet of monitors, ever ſoliciting our regard, becauſe ever preſent to our ſenſes.—So that I believe, it may be ſaid of this *amiable method*, in which our LORD conveyed; as well as of that *powerful energy*, which attended his doctrines; That *never man ſpake like this man.*——The

harveſt

Emboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding ſketches, I beg leave to confide in the ſame benevolence *of* taſte, *for the protection and ſupport of the two remaining eſſays; which exhibit a proſpect of* ſtill life, *and* grand operation: *which moralize on the moſt compoſed, and moſt magnificent appearances of things. ——In which* fancy *is again ſuffered to introduce her imagery; but only as the handmaid of* truth: *in order to dreſs her perſon, and diſplay her charms; to engage the attention, and win the love, even of the* gay, *and of the* faſhionable. *Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable pictures of nature, and deriving inſtructive obſervations; than by the laborious method of long-deduced arguments, or cloſe connected reaſonings.——The contemplation of the heavens and the earth, of their admirable properties, and beneficial changes, has always afforded the moſt exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taſte, I have drawn my ſerious admonitions from the ſtupendous theatre, and variegated ſcenary of the univerſe. That the reader may learn his duty, from his very pleaſures: may gather* wiſdom, *mingled with* virtue, *from the moſt refined* entertainments, *and nobleſt* delights.

The evening, *drawing her ſables over the world, and gently darkening into* Night, *is a ſeaſon peculiarly proper for ſedate conſideration. All circumſtances con-*

harveſt approaching, he reminds his diſciples of a far more important harveſt, John iv. 35 Matth xiii. 39. when immortal beings ſhall be *reaped* from the grave, and *gathered in* from all the quarters of the earth; when every human creature ſhall ſuſtain the character of valuable *wheat*, or deſpicable *tares*; and accordingly be lodged in manſions of everlaſting ſecurity, or conſigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire.——In his charge to *fiſhermen*, when they are commencing preachers. Matth iv. 19. he exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to uſe the ſame *aſſiduity* and *addreſs* in winning ſouls, as they were wont to exerciſe in catching the finny prey.——But, for a *further* illuſtration of this no leſs *uſeful*, than *curious* ſubject, I would refer my reader to a moſt valuable note, in Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s obſervations on the prophecies; p. 148. 4to edition.

cur,

our, to hush our passions, and soothe our cares; to tempt our steps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to serious reflection.

———Then is the time,
For those whom wisdom, and whom nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degen'rate croud,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace;
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks *.

The favour I would solicit for the first *of the following compositions is, That it may be permitted to attend, in such retired and contemplative excursions. To attend, if not under the character of a friend, at least in the humble capacity of a servant, or a page:——as a* servant, *to* open *the* door *of meditation, and* remove *every* impediment *to those best exercises of the mind; which blend advantage with amusement, and improve while they delight:—— as a* page, *to* gather up *the unstable, fluctuating* train *of fancy; and collect her fickle powers into a consistent, regular, and useful habit of thinking.*

The other, conversant among the starry regions, *would lead the imagination through those beautiful tracks of unclouded azure; and point out to the judgment, some of those astonishing particulars, which so eminently signalize the celestial worlds. A prospect this, to which curiosity attracts our eyes, and to which scripture itself often directs our study. A prospect, of all others most excellently calculated, to* enlarge *the soul, and* ennoble *its conceptions;——to give the highest apprehensions of the* everlasting GOD, *and create sentiments of becoming superiority, with relation to all* transitory *interests;——in a word, to furnish* faith *with the surest foundation, for a steady affiance, and true magnanimity of spirit; to afford* piety *the strong-*

* Thomſ. Autumn, l. 973. laſt Edit. 12mo.

eſt motives, both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.

While Galilæo *lifts his tube, and diſcovers the prodigious magnitude of thoſe radiant orbs;——while* Newton *meaſures their amazing diſtances, and unites the whole ſyſtem, in harmonious order, by the ſubtle influences of attraction:—— I would only, like the herald before that illuſtrious* Hebrew *, *proclaim at every turn,* "Bow the knee, *and adore the almighty Maker;* "*magnify his eternal name,* and make his praiſe, *like* "*all his works,* to be glorious"

* Gen. xli. 43.

The

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

Night is fair Virtue's *immemorial friend:*
The conſcious moon, through ev'ry diſtant age,
Has held a lamp to Wiſdom.

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CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

THE buſineſs of the day diſpatched, and the ſultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk: a walk, in one of the *fineſt receſſes* of the country; and in one of the moſt *pleaſant evenings*, which the ſummer-ſeaſon produced.

The limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a *verdant canopy*, and caſt a moſt refreſhing ſhade. Under my feet lay a *carpet* of nature's *velvet*; graſs intermingled with moſs, and embroidered with flowers. Jeſſamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees; diſplaying their *artleſs beauties* to the eye, and diffuſing their *delicious ſweets* through the air. On either ſide, the boughs, rounded into a ſet of regular arches, opened a view into the *diſtant fields*, and preſented me with a a proſpect of the *bending ſkies*. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in a *tribute* of *harmony*, and ſoothing themſelves to reſt with ſongs. While a French horn, from a neighbouring ſeat, ſent its melodious accents, ſoftened by the length of their paſſage, to complete the *concert* of the *grove*.

Roving in this moſt agreeable manner, my thoughts were exerciſed on a ſubject, more delightful than the

ſeaſon, or the ſcene. I mean our late *ſignal victory* over the united forces of *inteſtine treaſon*, and *foreign invaſion*. A victory, which pours joy through the preſent age, and will tranſmit its influences to generations yet unborn.——Are not all the bleſſings, which can endear ſociety, or render life itſelf deſirable, centered in our preſent *happy conſtitution*, and *auſpicious government?* And were they not *all* ſtruck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at *Rome*; levelled by *France*; and ſeconded by factious *ſpirits* at *home?* Who then can be ſufficiently thankful, for the gracious interpoſition of Providence; which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confuſion, on the authors of our troubles?

Methinks, every thing *valuable*, which I poſſeſs; every thing *charming*, which I behold; conſpire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmoleſted along the vale of *private life*, and taſte all the innocent ſatisfactions of a *contemplative retirement*.——Had rebellion* ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns: inſtead of walking with *ſecurity* and *complacence* in theſe flowery paths, I might have met the *aſſaſſin* with his *dagger*: or have been obliged to provide for my ſafety, by abandoning my habitation.—Farewell then, ye fragrant ſhades; ſeats of meditation, and calm repoſe! I ſhould have been driven from your *loved retreats*, to make way for ſome *inſulting victor*.—Farewell, then, ye pleaſing toils, and wholeſome amuſements of my rural hours! I ſhould no more have reared the tender *flower* to the ſun; no more have taught the *eſpalier* to expand her boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my *kitchen-garden*, the pureſt ſupplies of health.

Had rebellion ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns; inſtead of being regaled with the *muſic* of the *woods*,

* Referring to the rebellion, ſet on foot in the year 1745,—which, for ſeveral months, made a very alarming progreſs in the *North*——but was happily extinguiſhed by the glorious and deciſive battle of *Culloden*.

I might have been alarmed with the ſound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Inſtead of being entertained with this *beautiful landſkip*, I might have beheld our houſes ranſacked, and our villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced cities encompaſſed with armies, and our fruitful fields "clothed with deſolation;" or have been ſhocked with the ſtill more frightful images of "garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Inſtead of *peace*, with her chearing olives, ſheltering our abodes; inſtead of *juſtice*, with her impartial ſcale, ſecuring our goods; *perſecution* had brandiſhed her ſword, and *ſlavery* clanked her chains.

Nor are theſe miſeries *imaginary* only, or the creatures of a groundleſs panic. There are, in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately *experienced* them in all their rigour *. And, if the *malignant* ſpirit of *Popery*, had forced itſelf into our church; if an *abjured Pretender*, had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reaſon to expect a mitigation of their ſeverity, on our behalf.——But, ſuppoſing the *tender mercies* of a bigotted uſurper, to have been ſomewhat leſs *cruel*; yet where, alas! would have been the *encouragement*, to cultivate our little portion; or what *pleaſure* could ariſe, from an improved ſpot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment, at the mercy of *lawleſs power?* This embittering circumſtance would ſpoil their reliſh: and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyleſs* acquiſition.——In vain, might the *vine* ſpread her purple cluſters; in vain, be laviſh of her generous juices; if *tyranny*, like a ravenous harpy, ſhould be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to ſnatch it from the lip of *induſtry*.

Liberty, that deareſt of names; and *property*, that

* See a pamphlet, intitled, *Popery always the ſame.*——Which contains a narrative of the *perſecutions*, and ſevere hardſhips, lately ſuffered by the *Proteſtants*, in the ſouthern parts of *France*; and cloſes with a moſt *ſeaſonable*, *alarming*, and *ſpirited addreſs* to the inhabitants of *Great Britain*. Printed 1746.

beſt

beſt of charters; give an additional, an inexpreſſible charm, to every delightful object.——See how the declining ſun has beautified the *weſtern clouds*; has arrayed them in crimſon, and ſkirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our *domeſtic bliſs*, is property; ſuch an improvement of our *public privileges*, is liberty.———When the lamp of day ſhall entirely withdraw his beams, there will ſtill remain the ſame collection of floating vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The carnation bluſhes no more; the golden edgings are gone; and all the *lovely tinges* are loſt, in a *leaden coloured louring* ſadneſs. *Such* would be the aſpect, of all theſe ſcenes of beauty; all theſe abodes of pleaſure; if expoſed continually to the caprice of *arbitrary ſway*, or held in a ſtate of abject and *cringing dependence*.

The light of heaven has almoſt finiſhed his daily race, and haſtens to the goal. He deſcends lower and lower; till his chariot wheels ſeem to hover on the utmoſt verge of day. And, what is ſomewhat remarkable, his *orb*, upon the point of ſetting, grows *broader:* the *ſhadows*, juſt before they are loſt in undiſtinguiſhed darkneſs, are ſurpriſingly *lengthened* *. ——Like *bleſſings*, little prized, while *poſſeſſed:* but highly eſteemed, the very inſtant they are *preparing* for their *flight*; bitterly regretted when once they are *gone*, and to be ſeen no more.

The radiant globe is, now, half immerſed beneath the duſky earth. He is taking his leave of our hemiſphere, and gilds the plains with a languid luſtre.——But, could I view the *ſea*, at this juncture, it would yield a moſt amuſing and curious ſpectacle. The rays, ſtriking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glaſs: or, reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours.———A *ſtranger*, as he walks along the ſandy beach; and, loſt in penſive attention, liſtens to the murmurings of the

* *Majoreſque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbræ.* Virg.

reſtleſs

reſtleſs flood; is agreeably alarmed by the *gay decorations* of the ſurface. With entertainment, and with wonder, he ſees the curling waves, here gliſtering with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another, glancing a caſt of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of *fluid ſcenary*, that may vie with yonder penſil tapeſtries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

But, while I am tranſported by fancy to the ſhores of the ocean, the great luminary is ſunk beneath the horizon, and totally diſappears. The whole face of the ground is overſpread with ſhades; or with, what one of the fineſt painters of nature calls, a *dun obſcurity*. Only a few very ſuperior eminences are tipt with ſtreaming ſilver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the *laſt ſmiles* of day *; are ſtill irradiated by the departing beams.—But, oh! how tranſient is the diſtinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the bleſſings, which mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almoſt as ſoon as *granted*. See! how languiſhingly it trembles on the leafy ſpire; and glimmers, with a dying faintneſs, on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity, that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold its ſtation. While I ſpeak, it expires; and reſigns the world to the gradual approach of night.

——— *Now* twilight *grey*
Has in her ſober liv'ry *all things clad* †.

Every object, a little while ago, glared with light; but now, all appears under a more qualified luſtre. The animals harmonize with the inſenſible creation; and what was *gay* in thoſe, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an univerſal *gravity*. In the *meadows*, all was jocund and ſportive: but now the

* See this remarkable appearance, delicately deſcribed, and wrought into a compariſon, which, in my opinion, is one of the moſt juſt, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery, to be found in modern poetry. *Night-Thoughts*, No II. p. 42. 4to Edit.

† Milt. *Par. Loſt*, B. iv. l. 598.

gameſome

gameſome lambs are grown weary of their frolics; and the tired ſhepherd has impoſed ſilence on his pipe. In the *branches*, all was ſprightlineſs and ſong: but now the lively green is wrapt in the deſcending glooms; and no tuneful airs are heard, but only the plaintive ſtock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove.——Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unſeaſonable levity. Therefore, be theſe moments devoted to thoughts, *ſedate*, as the cloſing day; *ſolemn*, as the face of things. And, indeed, however my ſocial hours are enlivened with *innocent pleaſantry*, let every evening, in her ſable habit, toll the bell to *ſerious conſideration*. Nothing can be more proper, for a creature that borders upon eternity, and is haſting continually to his final audit; than daily to ſlip away from the circle of amuſements, and frequently to relinquiſh the hurry of buſineſs, in order to conſider and adjuſt "the things that belong to his peace."

SINCE the ſun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in *pitchy darkneſs?* Whence theſe remainders of *diminiſhed brightneſs?* which, though ſcarcely forming a refulgence, yet ſmoothe the rugged brow of night. I ſee not the ſhining orb, and yet am cheared with a portion of his ſoftened ſplendors.——Does he remember us, in his progreſs through other climes; and ſend a *detachment* of his rays, to *eſcort* us in our further motions; or *cover* (if I may uſe the military term) our *retreat*, from the ſcene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, ſufficient to render our circumſtances eaſy, and our ſituation agreeable? till ſleep pours its ſoft oppreſſion on the organs of ſenſe; till ſleep ſuſpends all the operations of our hands; and entirely ſuperſedes any more occaſion for the light.

No: it is ill judged and unreaſonable, to aſcribe this beneficent conduct to the *ſun*. Not unto *him*; not unto *him*; but unto his *Almighty Maker*, we are obliged, for this noble preſent, this valuable legacy.

The

The gracious Author of our being, has ſo diſpoſed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and beneficial effect. The ſunbeams, falling on the higher parts of the aerial fluid, inſtead of paſſing on in ſtrait lines, are bent inward, and inflected to our ſight. Their natural courſe is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpoſe to favour us with a welcome and ſalutary viſit.—By which means, the bleſſing of light, and the ſeaſon of buſineſs, are conſiderably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing circumſtance, prolonged moſt conſiderably; when the vehement heats of ſummer, incline the *ſtudent* to poſtpone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harveſt, call the *huſbandman* abroad, before the day is fully riſen.

AFTER all the ardors of the ſultry day, how reviving is this *coolneſs!*—This gives new *verdure* to the fading plants; new *vivacity* to the withering flowers; and a more exquiſite *fragrancy* to their mingled ſcent. —By this, the *air* alſo receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itſelf with greater activity: to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs and co-operate, with a briſker impulſe, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.—This I might call the grand *alembic* of *nature;* which diſtils her moſt ſovereign *cordial*, the refreſhing *dews*. *Inceſſant heat* would deſtroy the pearly drops, or oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible exhalations. *Turbulent winds*, or even the gentler motions of *Aurora*'s fan, would diſſipate the riſing vapours, and not ſuffer them to come to a coalition. But favoured by the ſtilneſs, and condenſed by the coolneſs of the night, they form that *finely-tempered humidity*, which chears the vegetable world, as ſleep exhilarates the animal.

Such are the advantages of *ſolitude*. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect ſtable purpoſes, on its fluctuating waves? The world is a ſchool of wrong; and who does not feel himſelf warping to its pernicious

pernicious influences * ? On this *ſea* of *glaſs* †, how inſenſibly we *ſlide* from our *ſtedfaſtneſs!* Some *ſacred truth*, which was ſtruck in lively characters on our ſouls, is obſcured, if not obliterated. Some *noble reſolution*, which Heaven had wrought in our breaſts, is ſhaken, if not overthrown. Some *enticing vanity*, which we had ſolemnly renounced, again practiſes its charms, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance, kindled a fever of irregular deſire in our hearts? How often has a word of applauſe dropped luſcious poiſon into our ears; or ſome diſreſpectful expreſſion, raiſed a guſt of paſſion in our boſoms? Our innocence is of ſo *tender* a *conſtitution*, that it ſuffers in the promiſcuous crowd; our purity of ſo *delicate* a *complexion*, that it ſcarce touches on the world, without contracting a ſtain. We ſee, we hear, with *peril*.

But here *ſafety* dwells. Every meddling and intruſive avocation is ſecluded. Silence holds the door againſt the ſtrife of tongues, and all the impertinences of idle converſation. The buſy ſwarm of vain images and cajoling temptations; that beſet us, with a buzzing importunity, amidſt the gaieties of life; are chaſed by theſe thickening ſhades.—— Here I may, without diſturbance, commune with my own heart; and learn that *beſt* of *ſciences*, to *know myſelf*. Here the ſoul may rally her diſſipated powers, and grace recover its native energy.—This is the opportunity to rectify the evil impreſſions, and expel the contagion of corrupting examples. This is the place where I may, with advantage, apply myſelf to ſubdue the *rebel within*; and be maſter, not of a *ſceptre*, but of *myſelf*. ——Throng then, ye ambitious, the *levees* of the powerful; I will be punctual in my *aſſignations* with ſolitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, ſolitude has charms incomparably more en-

* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod compoſui, turbatur: aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, redit. Inimica eſt multorum converſatio.* Senec.

† Rev. xv. 2.

gaging,

gaging, than the *entertainments* preſented in the *theatre*; or the *honours* conferred in the *drawing-room*.

I SAID ſolitude.—But am I then *alone?*—It is true, my acquaintance are at a diſtance, I have ſtole away from company, and am remote from all *human* obſervation.—— But that is an alarming thought,

Millions *of* ſpiritual creatures *walk the earth*,
Unſeen, *both when we wake, and when we ſleep* *.

Perhaps there may be numbers of thoſe *inviſible beings*, patrolling this ſame retreat; and joining with me in contemplating the Creator's works. Perhaps, thoſe *miniſtering ſpirits*, who rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely receſs; and, even in our moſt *ſolitary* moments, be our conſtant *attendants*.—What a pleaſing awe is awakened by ſuch a reflection! How *venerable* it renders my *retired* walks! I am ſtruck with reverence, as under the roof of ſome *ſacred edifice*; or in the *preſence-chamber* of ſome mighty monarch.—O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the leaſt diſſolute affection; where ſuch refined and exalted intelligences exerciſe their watch!

It is *poſſible*, that I am encompaſſed with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes; but it is *certain*, that GOD, the *infinite* and *eternal* GOD, is ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, ſurrounds me; ſupports me; pervades me. "In HIM I live, move, and "have my being." The whole world is his *auguſt temple*; and in the moſt *ſequeſtered corner*, I appear before his adorable Majeſty, no leſs than when I worſhip in his houſe, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart cleanſed from idols, and devoted to his ſervice. In every circumſtance, let me feel no *ambition*, but to *pleaſe* him; nor covet any *happineſs*, but to *enjoy* him.

* Milt. *Par. Loſt*, B. IV. l. 677.

How ſublime is the deſcription, and how ſtriking the ſentiment, in that noble paſſage of the Pſalms! *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I climb up into the* heights of *heaven, thou art there* inthroned in light. *If I go down to the* depths of the *grave, thou art there alſo* in thy pavilion of darkneſs. *If I retire* to the remoteſt eaſtern climes, *where the morning firſt takes wing*; *if*, ſwifter than the darting ray, *I* paſs to the oppoſite regions of the weſt, and *remain in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea* :* ſhall I, in *that* diſtant ſituation, be beyond thy reach; or, by *this* ſudden tranſition, eſcape thy notice? So far from it, that could I, with one glance of thought, tranſport myſelf beyond all the bounds of creation, I ſhould ſtill be incircled with the *immenſity* of thy *eſſence;* or rather, ſtill be incloſed in the *hollow* of thy *hand*. Important and delightful truth! let it be interwoven with every thought; and become one with the very conſciouſneſs of my exiſtence! that I may continually *walk with* GOD, and conduct myſelf in every ſtep of my behaviour, "as *ſeeing H I M* "*that is inviſible.*"

They are the happy perſons; *felicity*, true felicity, is *all their own*; who live under an habitual ſenſe of GOD's omnipreſence, and a ſweet perſuaſion of his ſpecial love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand; nothing can be ſo near to terrify, as their almighty Guardian to ſecure them.——To theſe, the hours can never be *tedious;* and it is impoſſible for them to be *alone*. Do they ſtep aſide from the *occupations* of animal life? a more exalted ſet of employments engage their attention. They addreſs themſelves, in all the *various acts* of devotion, to their heavenly Father, *who* now *ſees in ſecret, and will* hereafter *reward them openly*. They ſpread all their wants

* Pſal. cxxxix. 7. 8. 9. There is, I think, an additional ſtrength and beauty in the thought; if, with the learned Mr *Mudge*, we ſuppoſe an *antitheſis* between the two clauſes of this laſt verſe, as there evidently is between thoſe of the preceding; and that they expreſs, in a poetical ſtile, the extremities of the *Eaſt* and the *Weſt*.

before

before his indulgent eye, and diſburden all their ſorrows into his compaſſionate boſom.——Do they withdraw from *human ſociety?* they find themſelves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they reſign the ſatisfactions of ſocial intercourſe; it is to cultivate a correſpondence with the condeſcending DEITY, and taſte the pleaſures of *divine friendſhip*.——What is ſuch a *ſtate*, but the very ſuburbs of heaven? What is ſuch a *conduct*, but an antipaſt of eternal bleſſedneſs?

Now, my ſoul, the *day is ended*. The hours are all fled: they are fled to the ſupreme Judge, and have given in their evidence. An evidence, regiſtered in heaven, and to be produced at the great audit.—Happy *they!* whoſe improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes. Who have ſeized them, as they advanced; and engaged them in the *purſuit* of *wiſdom*, or the *ſervice* of *virtue*.

How is the day gone, almoſt as ſoon as it dawned!—The ſilent moments ſlip away *inſenſibly*. No thief ſteals more unperceived from the pillaged houſe. Where-ever we are, however employed, time purſues his inceſſant courſe. Though *we* are liſtleſs and dilatory; the *great meaſurer* of our *days* preſſes on; ſtill preſſes on, in his unwearied career; and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.——Is it not then ſurpriſingly ſtrange, to hear people complain of the *tediouſneſs* of their time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their hands? To ſee them contriving a variety of amuſing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden?—Ah! thoughtleſs mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are *ſwifter* than a *poſt*; which, carrying diſpatches of the laſt importance, with unremitted ſpeed ſcours the road. They paſs away like the *nimble ſhips*; which have the wind in their wings, and ſkim along the watery plain. They haſten to their deſtined period, with the *rapidity* of an *eagle*; which leaves the ſtormy blaſt behind her,

while ſhe cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey *.

And now it is gone, how *ſhort* it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in *perſpective*, it ſeemed a very conſiderable ſpace. Minutes crouded upon minutes, and hours ranged behind hours, exhibited an extenſive plain, and flattered me with a long progreſſion of pleaſures. But upon a *retroſpective* view, how wonderfully is the ſcene altered! The landſkip, large and ſpacious, which a *warm fancy* drew, brought to the teſt of *cool experience*, ſhrinks into a ſpan. Juſt as the ſhores vaniſh, and mountains dwindle to a ſpot, when the ſailor, ſurrounded by ſkies and ocean, throws his laſt look on his native land.—How clearly do I now diſcover the cheat! May it never impoſe upon my unwary imagination again! I find there is nothing abiding on this ſide eternity. A *long* duration, in a ſtate of *finite* exiſtence, is *mere illuſion*.

Perhaps, the *healthy*, and the *gay*, may not readily credit the ſerious truth; eſpecially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourſelves to the deciſion of the *ancient*. Aſk ſome venerable old perſon, that is juſt marching off the mortal ſtage; *How many have been the days of the years of thy life* †? It was a monarch's queſtion, and therefore can want no recommendation, to the faſhionable world.—— Obſerve, how he ſhakes his hoary locks, and, from a deep-felt conviction, replies: "*Fourſcore years* have "finiſhed their rounds, to furrow theſe cheeks, and "clothe this head in ſnow. Such a term may ſeem "long and large, to inconſiderate youth. But, oh! "how ſhort, how ſcanty, to one that has made the

* Job ix. 25. 26. By theſe three very expreſſive images, the inſpired poet repreſents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* flight of *time*. The paſſage is illuſtrated with great judgment, and equal delicacy, in Dr Grey's moſt ingenious abridgment of Schultens.——*Quæ tribus in elementis velociſſima, hic admirabili cum emphaſi congeruntur. In terris, nil pernicius curſore, & quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidius tamen adhuc undas, non ſecant, ſed ſupervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnium rapidiſſime aerem grandius alis permetitur aquila, præcipiti lapſu ruens in prædam.*

† Gen. xlvii. 8.

"experiment?

" experiment? *Short*, as a *gleam* of tranſient ſunſhine; " *ſcanty*, 'as the *ſhadow* that departeth.' Methinks, " it was but yeſterday, that I exchanged my childiſh " ſports, for manly exerciſes; and now, I am reſigning " them both, for the ſleep of death. As ſoon as we " are *born*, we begin to draw to our *end*; and how " ſmall is the interval, between the cradle and the " tomb!"—O! may we believe this teſtimony of mature age! May every evening bring it, with clearer evidence, to our minds! And may we form ſuch an eſtimate of the *little pittance*, while it is upon the *advancing* hand; as we ſhall certainly make, when the ſands are all *run down!*

Let me add one reflection on the *work* to be *done*, while this ſhuttle is flying through the loom †. A work of no ſmall difficulty, and yet of the utmoſt conſequence.——Haſt thou not ſeen, haſt thou not heard of the *excellent* of the *earth*; who were living images of their Maker? His *divine likeneſs* was transfuſed into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conduct. Beamed forth in the *meekneſs* of *wiſdom*, and *purity* of *affection*; in all the *tender offices* of love, and all the *noble efforts* of zeal. To be ſtampt with the ſame beautiful ſignature, and to be followers of them, as they were of CHRIST; *this*, *this* is thy *buſineſs*. On the accompliſhment of this, thy eternal *all* depends. And will an affair of ſuch unſpeakable weight, admit of a moment's delay, or conſiſt with the leaſt remiſſneſs?—Eſpecially, ſince much of thy appointed time is already elapſed; and the remainder is *all uncertainty*, ſave only that it is in the very act to fly.—Or ſuppoſe, thou hadſt made a *covenant* with the grave, and waſt aſſured of reaching the age of *Methuſelah*; how ſoon would even *ſuch a leaſe* expire!—Extend it, if you pleaſe, ſtill farther; and let it be *co-exiſtent* with *nature* itſelf: yet, how ſpeedily will the conſummation of all things commence! For, yet a very little while, and the commiſſioned archangel

† My days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle, Job vii. 6.

lifts up his hand to heaven, and ſwears by the almighty Name, *That time ſhall be no longer* *. Then, *abuſed* opportunities, will never return; and *new* opportunities, will never more be offered. Then, ſhould negligent mortals wiſh, ever ſo paſſionately, for a few hours;—a *few moments* only;—to be thrown back from the opening eternity; *thouſands of worlds* would not be able to procure the grant.

Shall I now be induſtrious to *ſhorten*, what is no longer than a *ſpan*; or to *quicken* the pace, of what is ever on the *wing*? Shall I ſquander away what is

* This alludes to the beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abſtracted from its ſpiritual meaning, and conſidered only as a ſtately *piece* of *machinery*, well deſerves our attention; and I will venture to ſay, has not its *ſuperior*, perhaps not its *equal*, in any of the moſt celebrated maſters of *Greece* and *Rome*.——All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmoſphere, all that is ſtriking or magnificent in every element, is taken in to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is diſproportionate; but an uniform air of ineffable Majeſty, greatens, exalts, ennobles the whole.——Be pleaſed to obſerve the *aſpect* of this auguſt perſonage. All the brightneſs of the ſun ſhines in his countenance, and all the rage of the fire burns in his feet.——See his *apparel*; the clouds compoſe his robe, and the drapery of the ſky floats upon his ſhoulders. The rainbow forms his diadem; and that which "compaſſeth the heaven with a glorious circle," is the ornament of his head.—Behold his *attitude*. One foot ſtands on the ocean, and the other reſts on the land. The wide-extended earth, and the world of waters, ſerve as pedeſtals for theſe mighty columns.——Conſider the *action*. His hand is lifted up to the height of the ſtars. He ſpeaks; and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight-deſart reſounds with the lion's roar. The artillery of the ſkies is diſcharged at the ſignal; a peal of ſevenfold thunder ſpreads the alarm; and prepares the world to receive his orders.—To finiſh all; and give the higheſt grandeur, as well as the utmoſt ſolemnity, to the repreſentation; hear the *decree* that iſſues from his mouth. He *ſwears by* HIM *that liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever manner, ſo majeſtic a perſon had expreſſed himſelf; he could not fail of commanding univerſal attention. But when he confirms his ſpeech, by a moſt ſacred and inviolable oath; we are not only wrapt in ſilent reſpence, but overwhelmed with the profoundeſt awe.——He ſwears, *That time ſhall be no longer*. Was ever voice ſo full of terror, ſo big with wonder? It proclaims, not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It ſtrikes off the wheels of nature, bids ages and generations ceaſe to roll; and, with one potent word, conſigns a whole world over to diſſolution.——This is *one*, among a *multitude*, of very ſublime and *maſterly ſtrokes*, to be found, in that too much neglected book—the BIBLE.

unutterably

unutterably important, while it laſts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable?* O! my ſoul, forbear the folly; forbear the deſperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a *loiterer*, the arrow that *boundeth* from the ſtring; or ſweep away *diamonds*, as the *refuſe* of thy houſe?—Throw time away! aſtoniſhing, ruinous, irreparable profuſeneſs! Throw empires away, and be blameleſs. But O! be parſimonious of thy days; huſband thy precious hours. They go connected; indiſſolubly connected, with heaven or hell *. *Improved*, they are a ſure pledge of everlaſting glory; *waſted*, they are a ſad preface to never-ending confuſion and anguiſh.

WHAT a *profound ſilence* has compoſed the world! ſo profound is the ſilence, that my very breath ſeems a noiſe! the ticking of my watch is diſtinctly heard; if I do but ſtir, it creates a diſturbance.—There is, now, none of that confuſed din, from the tumultuous city: no voice of jovial ruſtics, from the neighbouring meadow: no chirping melody, from the ſhady thicket.—Every lip is ſealed; not the leaſt whiſper invades the air; nor the leaſt motion ruſtles among the boughs. *Echo* herſelf ſleeps unmoleſted. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no ſound, but the *liquid lapſe* of a murmuring ſtream.

All things are huſh'd, as nature's ſelf lay dead.

If, in the midſt of this *deep* and univerſal *compoſure*, *ten thouſand* bellowing *thunders* ſhould burſt over my head; and rend the ſkies with their united vollies; O!

* I remember to have ſeen, upon a ſun-dial in a phyſician's garden at *Northampton*, the following INSCRIPTION; which, I think, is the moſt *proper motto*, for the inſtrument that meaſures our time; and the moſt *ſtriking admonition*, which can poſſibly be given, to every eye that glances upon it;——*Ab hoc Momento pendet Æternitas.*——The weighty ſenſe of which, I know not how to expreſs in *Engliſh*, more happily than in thoſe words of Dr *Watts*,

Good God! on what a *ſlender thread*
[Or, on what a *moment* of time]
Hang everlaſting things!

how

how ſhould I bear ſo *unexpected* a *ſhock?* It would ſtun my ſenſes, and confound my thoughts. I ſhould ſhudder in every limb; and, perhaps, ſink to the earth with terror. Conſider then, O mortals! conſider, what a much more *prodigious* and *amazing* call, will, ere long, alarm your ſleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have ſlumbered, in the moſt undiſturbed repoſe, for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable conſternation muſt the *ſhout* of the *archangel*, and the *trump* of GOD, occaſion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to diſtraction, the impenitent ſinner? The ſtupendous peal will ſound through the vaſt of heaven; will ſhake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepeſt receſſes of the grave. And how, O! how will the *priſoners* of *divine juſtice*, be able to endure that tremendous *ſummons*, to a more tremendous *tribunal?*—Do thou, my ſoul, liſten to the *ſtill voice* of the goſpel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then, ſhall that great midnight-cry loſe its *horror*, and be *muſic* to thy ears. It ſhall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty to the dungeon-captive; as the year of jubilee, to the haraſſed *ſlave*. This, this ſhall be its charming import, "*Awake, and ſing, ye that dwell* "*in duſt* *."

WHAT a general *ceſſation* of *affairs*, has this duſky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themſelves, in a thouſand buſy forms. The city ſwarmed, with paſſing and repaſſing multitudes. All the country was ſweat and duſt. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. *Art* ſat prying with her piercing eyes; while *induſtry* plied her reſtleſs hands.——But ſee; how all this fervent and impetuous buſtle, is fled with the ſetting ſun. The beaſts are ſunk to their graſſy couch; and the winged

* Iſ. xxvi. 19.

people

people are retired to their downy neſts. The hammer has reſigned its ſounding taſk, and the file ceaſes to repeat its flying touches. Shut is the well-frequented ſhop, and its threſhold no longer worn by the feet of numerous cuſtomers. The village-ſwain lies drowned in ſlumbers; and even his truſty dog, who, for a conſiderable time, ſtood centry at the door, is extended at his eaſe, and ſnores with his maſter. ——In every place, *toil* reclines her head, and *application* folds her arms. All intereſts ſeem to be forgot; all purſuits are ſuſpended; all employment is ſunk away; ſunk away, like the fluttering myriads, that lately ſported in the ſun's departing rays. It is like the Sabbath of univerſal nature; or, as though the pulſe of life ſtood ſtill.

Thus will it be with our infinitely momentous concerns; when once *the ſhadows of the evening*, that long evening which follows the footſteps of death, *are ſtretched over us*. The dead cannot ſeek unto GOD; the living, the living alone, are poſſeſſed of this ineſtimable opportunity *. "There is no work or de-
"vice, no repentance or amendment, in the grave †,
"whither

* ——*Nunc, nunc properandus, & acri*
Fingendus ſine fine rota.—— Pers.
Behold! *now* is the accepted time. Behold! *now* is the day of ſalvation, 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† They who are gone down to the grave, are repreſented (Iſ. xxxviii. 11.) by the phraſe, חרל יושבי ——rendered by *Vitringa*, *Thoſe that inhabit the* land of *intermiſſion* or *ceſſation*.——Which prevents all appearance of *tautology* in the ſentence; and is, I think, a valuable *improvement* of the tranſlation; as it conveys an idea, not only diſtinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very afflicting nature; ſuch as was perfectly natural for the royal ſinger, and royal ſufferer, to dwell upon, in his deſponding moments.—— Thus interpreted, the ſenſe will run; "*I ſhall ſee man no more*; I "ſhall be cut off from the chearful ways of men, and all the ſweets "of human ſociety. And what is a farther aggravation of the "threatened ſtroke, *I ſhall*, by its taking place, *be* numbered *with* "*thoſe, that inhabit the land of* entire *ceſſation* and inactivity: where "there will be no more poſſibility, of contributing to the happineſs of my kingdom; no more opportunity, of advan-"cing my Creator's glory, or of making my own final ſalvation "ſure."

——A

" whither we are all haſting." When once that *cloſing ſcene* is advanced, we ſhall have no other part to act on this *earthly theatre*. Then the ſluggard, who has ſlumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, muſt lie down in hopeleſs diſtreſs, and everlaſting ſorrow. Then that awful doom will take place, " He that is " *holy*, let him be holy ſtill; and he that is *filthy*, let " him be filthy for ever."

Is it ſo, my ſoul? Is this the *only*, *only* time allotted, for obtaining the great reward, and making thy ſalvation ſure? And art thou lulled, in a *vain ſecurity*; or dreaming on, in a *ſupine inadvertency*? Start, O! ſtart from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the preſent ſeed-time, that eternity may yield a joyful harveſt.——We eſpecially, who are *watchmen* in *Iſrael*, and *miniſters* of the glorious *goſpel*; may *we* be awakened, by this conſideration, to all aſſiduity in our holy office. Some or other of *our people*, are ever and anon departing into the inviſible ſtate; all *our friends* are making inceſſant approaches to their long home; and we *ourſelves* ſhall very ſhortly be tranſmitted to the confinement of the tomb. *This* is the favourable juncture, wherein *alone* we can contribute to their endleſs welfare. This is the criſis, the *all-important criſis*, of their final felicity. Inſtantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholeſome inſtructions; inſtantly let us ply them with our earneſt exhortations. A moment's delay may be an irreparable loſs; may be an irretrievable ruin. While we procraſtinate, a fatal ſtroke may intervene; and place *us* beyond the power of adminiſtering; or place *them* beyond all poſſibility of receiving any ſpiritual good *.

How

——A ſentiment like *this*, is grand and important; full of piety, and full of benevolence; removes all ſuſpicion of unbecoming *puſillanimity*, and does the higheſt *honour* to the monarch's character.

* The *caſe* repreſented by the *prophet*, (1 Kings xx. 40.), ſeems perfectly applicable, on this occaſion. *As thy ſervant was buſy here and there, he was gone.* So while we are either *remiſs* in our function,

or

How frequently is the face of nature *changed!* and, by changing, made more *agreeable!*—The long-continued glitter of the day, renders the ſoothing ſhades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the eaſt with ſo pleaſing a luſtre, as after the ſullen gloom of a dark and black night.—— At preſent, a *calm* of tranquillity, and undiſturbed repoſe, is ſpread through the univerſe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themſelves aſleep. Nothing ſtirs. Not ſo much as a ſingle leaf nods. Even the quivering aſpin reſts. *And not one breath curls o'er the ſtream.*——Sometimes the *tempeſt* ſummons all the forces of the air; and pours itſelf, with reſiſtleſs fury, from the angry north. The whole atmoſphere is toſſed into tumultuous confuſion, and the watery world is heaved to the clouds. The aſtoniſhed mariner, and his ſtraining veſſel, now ſcale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully viſible on the broken ſurge: now ſhoot, with headlong impetuoſity, into the yawning gulph; and neither hulk, nor maſt, is ſeen. The ſtorm ſweeps over the continent; raves along the city-ſtreets; ſtruggles through the foreſt-boughs; and terrifies the ſavage nations, with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blaſt; their iron-trunks groan; and their ſtubborn limbs are daſhed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the ſolid tower totters on its baſis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, with an evident condeſcenſion to the ficklenеſs of our taſte. Becauſe, a perpetual *ſimilarity* of objects would create a cold *diſguſt*; therefore, the indulgent Father of our race has diverſified the univerſal ſcene, and bid every appearance bring with it the *charm* of *novelty*.—But this circumſtance is as *beneficial* as it is *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to mortals, ever intent up-

or laying ourſelves out upon *inferior cares*, the people of our charge may be gone;——gone beyond the influence of our *counſels*; beyond the reach of our *prayers*;——gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal ſtate.

on promoting our felicity: has taken care to mingle, in the conſtitution of things, what is pleaſing to our imagination, with what is ſerviceable to our intereſts. The piercing winds, and rugged aſpect of winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery ſcenes of ſpring, peculiarly delightful. At the ſame time, the keen froſts mellow the ſoil, and prepare it for the hand of induſtry. The ruſhing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it for a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great *laboratory*; and *December*'s cold collects the groſs materials, which are *ſublimated* by the refining warmth of *May*. The air is a pure *elaſtic* fluid; and was it always to remain in *this* motionleſs ſerenity, it would loſe much of its *active ſpring*; was it never agitated by *thoſe* wholeſome *concuſſions*, it would contract a noiſome, perhaps, a peſtilential taint. Inſtead of purifying, it would corrupt the vital juices; and, inſtead of inhaling refreſhments, our reſpiration might be a ſource of diſeaſes; or every gaſp we draw might be death *.—How then ſhould we admire! Oh! how ſhould we adore that happy union of benignity and wiſdom; which, from a *variety* of diſpenſations, produces an *uniformity* of good; a perpetual ſucceſſion of delights, and an uninterrupted ſeries of advantages!

The *darkneſs* is now at its height: and I cannot but

* Conſidering the immenſe quantity of coals, and other combuſtible materials, that are daily conſumed, and evaporate into the air. Conſidering the numberleſs ſteams, and clouds of ſmoke, that almoſt continually overwhelm populous cities;——the noiſome exhalations that ariſe from thronged infirmaries, and loathſome jails; from ſtagnating lakes, and putrid fens;——the variety of offenſive and unwholeſome effluvia, that proceed from other cauſes;——it is a very remarkable inſtance of a providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that *mankind* is not *ſuffocated* with *ſtench*; that the *air* is not *cloaked* with *filth*.——The air is the *common ſewer*, into which ten thouſand times ten thouſand nuiſances are inceſſantly diſcharged; and yet is preſerved ſo *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the moſt tranſparent medium for viſion; ſo *delicately undulatory*, as to tranſmit, with all imaginable diſtinctneſs, every diverſity of ſound; ſo *perfectly pure*, as to be the conſtant refiner of the fluids, in every animal that breathes.

admire

admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes not with a blunt and *abrupt incivility*, but makes gentle and *reſpectful advances*. A precipitate tranſition, from the ſplendors of day, to all the horrors of midnight, would be both inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would ſtrike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of ſight. Therefore, the gloom ruſhes not upon us inſtantaneouſly, but increaſes by ſlow degrees; and, ſending *twilight* before as its *harbinger*, decently advertiſes us of its approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded, by the change; but are able to take all ſuitable and timely meaſures for its reception. —Thus graciouſly has Providence regulated, not only the *grand viciſſitudes* of the ſeaſons, but alſo the *common interchanges* of light and darkneſs, with an apparent reference to *our comfort*.

Now, the fierce *inhabitants* of the *foreſt* forſake their dens. A thouſand grim forms, a thouſand growling monſters, pace the deſart. Death is in their jaws, while, ſtung with hunger, and athirſt for blood, they roam their nightly rounds.——O! *unfortunate traveller*, overtaken by the night, in thoſe diſmal wilds! How muſt he ſtand aghaſt, at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey! Defend him, propitious Heaven! or elſe he muſt ſee his endearing ſpouſe, and hail his native home, no more!——Now, the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the ſhepherd's footſteps, and beſets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, ſteals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

Happy for the world, were theſe the only deſtroyers that walk in darkneſs. But alas! there are *ſavages* in *human ſhape*; who, muffled in ſhades, infeſt the abodes of civilized life. The *ſons* of *violence* make choice of this ſeaſon *, to perpetrate the moſt out-

* ——————When Night
Darkens the ſtreets, then wander forth the ſons
Of *Belial*, flown with inſolence and wine. Milton.

rageous

rageous acts of wrong and robbery. The *adulterer* waiteth for the twilight; and, baſer than the villain on the highway, betrays the honour of his boſom-friend. Now, *faction* forms her cloſe cabals, and whiſpers her traiterous inſinuations. Now, *rebellion* plans her accurſed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now, crimes, that hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the ſeats of ſociety, and ſtalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now, the *vermin* of the *ſtews* crawl from their lurking holes, to wallow in ſin, and feed on the venom of the night. Each ſoothing himſelf with the *fond notion*, That all is ſafe; That *no eye ſees*.

And are they then concealed? Prepoſterous madmen! To draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a *little ſet* of mortals; but lay them open, to all theſe chaſte and *wakeful eyes* of Heaven *. Are they then concealed? No, truly; were theſe vigilant luminaries cloſed; an eye *keener* than the lightning's flaſh, *brighter* than ten thouſand ſuns, beholds their every motion. Their *thickeſt ſhades are beaming day* †, to the jealous Inſpector, and ſupreme Judge of human actions.—Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, "That clouds and darkneſs "are his majeſtic reſidence ‡?" In that very gloom, to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your *ſcreen*, is the *bar* of his *tribunal*. O! remember this: ſtand in awe, and ſin not. Remember, that the great and terrible GOD is *about your path* ‖, when you take your midnight range; is *about your bed*, when you indulge the looſe deſire; *and*

* ——— *Sed luna videt, ſed ſidera teſtes*
Intendunt oculos.

† This is finely and very forcibly expreſſed, by the Pſalmiſt: *If I ſay, Peradventure the darkneſs ſhall cover me, then ſhall my night be turned into day*: or, as it may be rendered ſomewhat more emphatically, *Even the night ſhall be broad day light all around me*, Pſal. cxxxix. 10.

‡ Pſal. xcvii. 2.

‖ The original words are much ſtronger than the tranſlation. זֹרִיתָ and חִסְבַּנְתָּ ſignify, Thou *ſifteſt* my path; and art *familiarly*, or *intimately*, *acquainted with* all my ways. The former, I apprehend,

and ſpies out all your ways, be they ever ſo ſecretly conducted, or artfully diſguiſed.

SOME minutes ago, a paſſenger croſſed along the road. His horſe's foot ſtruck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, though at a diſtance, catched the view; and ſaw, with *great clearneſs*, the bright ſparkles: of which, had I been ever ſo near, I ſhould not have diſcerned the *leaſt glimpſe* under the blaze of day.—So *, when ſickneſs has drawn a *veil* over the gaiety of our hearts; when misfortunes have *eclipſed* the ſplendor of our outward circumſtances; how many *important convictions* preſent themſelves with the brighteſt evidence! Under the ſunſhine of proſperity they lay undiſcovered; but, when ſome intervening cloud has darkened the ſcene, they emerge out of their obſcurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then the *world*, that deluſive cheat, confeſſes her emptineſs: but JESUS, the bright and morning ſtar, beams forth with inimitable luſtre. Then *vice* loſes all her fallacious allurements; that painted ſtrumpet is horrible as the hags of hell: but *virtue*, deſpiſed virtue, gains lovelineſs from a louring providence, and treads the ſhades with more than mortal charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the *ſons* of *ſorrow*, to our appointed ſhare of ſuffering! If tribulation tend to diſſipate the inward darkneſs, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome di-

apprehend, denoting the *exact* cognizance which the Almighty taketh; the latter implying the *conſtant* inſpection which he exerciſeth; over all the circumſtances of our conduct, Pſal. cxxxix. 2.

* I beg leave to inform the *young gentleman*, whoſe name dignifies my dedication; that *this* was a remark of his honoured *father*, when we rode together, and converſed in a duſky evening. I mention this circumſtance, partly, to ſecure the paragraph from contempt; partly, to give him, and the world, an idea of that eminently ſerious taſte, which diſtinguiſhed my deceaſed friend.——The *leſs obvious* the *reflection*, the more clearly it diſcovers a turn of mind remarkably ſpiritual; which wou'd ſuffer nothing to eſcape, without yielding ſome religious improvement: and the *meaner* the *incident*, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the nobleſt truths from the moſt trivial occurrences.

ſtreſs; welcome diſappointment; welcome whatever our froward fleſh, or peeviſh paſſions, would *miſcal* calamities. *Theſe light afflictions, which are but for a moment*, ſhall ſit eaſy upon our ſpirits; ſince they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and ſo, "*work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal* "*weight of glory* *."

How has this *darkneſs* ſnatched every ſplendid and graceful object from my ſight! It has daſhed the ſponge over the pictures of ſpring, and deſtroyed all the *delicate diſtinctions* of things. Where are now the fine tinges, that ſo lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The bluſh is ſtruck out, from the cheeks of the roſe; and the ſnowy hue is dropt from the lily. I caſt my eyes toward a magnificent ſeat; but the aſpiring columns, and fair-expanded front, are mingled in rude confuſion. Without the ſun, all the *elegance* of the blooming world is a *mere blank*; all the *ſymmetry* of architecture a *ſhapeleſs heap*.

Is not this an expreſſive emblem of the *lovelineſs* which the *Sun of righteouſneſs* transfuſes into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS, and his *merits*, I ſhould ſigh with anguiſh of ſpirit; even while I rove through ranks of the moſt beautiful flowers, or breathe amidſt a wilderneſs of ſweets. Was it not for JESUS, and his *merits*, I ſhould roam like ſome *diſconſolate ſpectre*, even through the ſmiles of creation, and the careſſes of fortune. My converſation, in this world,

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. The great *Stephens*, that oracle of *Grecian* learning, tranſlates our apoſtle's phraſe——καθ' υπερβολην, *Quo nihil majus dici aut fingi poteſt.* But how does the ſenſe riſe! how is the idea enlarged, under *two* ſuch forcible expreſſions!—The whole verſe is a maſterpiece of the beautiful *antitheſis*, the lively *deſcription*, and the nervous *diction*. It is one of thoſe noble paſſages in the inſpired writings, which, like ſome rich *aromatic plants*, cannot be tranſferred from their own generous and native ſoil, without being impaired in their vivacity, and loſing much of their delicacy. Perhaps, the following verſion may be ſomewhat leſs injurious to the ſacred original, than the common tranſlation;—*Our very light affliction, which is but juſt for the preſent moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal weight of glory.*

though

though dreſſed in the moſt engaging forms of external pleaſure, would be like the paſſage of a *condemned malefactor*, through enamelled meadows, and bowers of bliſs, to be broke upon the wheel, or tortured to death upon the rack. But a *daily reflection* on the LAMB's atoning blood; a *comfortable truſt*, that my ſoul is reconciled through this glorious expiation; this is the ray, the golden ray, that irradiates the face of the univerſe. This is the *oil* of *beauty*, which makes all things wear a chearful aſpect; and the *oil* of *gladneſs*, which diſpoſes the ſpectator to behold them with delight *. This, this is the ſacred charm, that teaches nature, in all her operations, ſo exquiſitely to pleaſe.

"MAN goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, "till the evening." But then his ſtrength fails; his ſpirits flag; and he ſtands in need, not only of ſome *reſpite* from *toil*, but of ſome kindly and ſovereign *refreſhments*.—What an admirable proviſion for this purpoſe, is *ſleep!* Sleep introduces a moſt welcome vacation, both for the ſoul and body. The exerciſes of the brain, and the labours of the hands, are at once diſcontinued. So that the *weary limbs* repair their exhauſted vigour: while the *penſive thoughts* drop their load of ſorrows, and the *buſy* ones reſt from the fatigue of intenſe application. ——Moſt reviving cordial! Equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual

* Thus applied, that fine piece of *flattery*, addreſſed to the *Heathen* emperor, is ſtrickly and literally *true*.

———*Vultus ubi tuus*
Affulſit populo, gratior it dies,
Et ſoles melius nitent. Hor.

Which I would caſt in a *Chriſtian* mould, and thus tranſlate:

When faith preſents the Saviour's death,
And whiſpers, "This is thine;"
Sweetly my riſing hours advance,
And peacefully decline.
While ſuch my views, the radiant ſun
Sheds a more ſprightly ray;
Each object ſmiles; all nature charms;
I ſing my cares away.

powers. It ſupples the *fleſhy machine*, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper poſture for eaſy play. It animates the *thinking faculties* with freſh alacrity, and rekindles their ardour for the ſtudies of the dawn. Without theſe enlivening recruits, how ſoon would the moſt robuſt conſtitution, be waſted into a *walking ſkeleton*; and the moſt learned ſage, degenerate into a *hoary idiot!*—Sometime ago, I beheld with ſurprize, poor *Florio*. His air was wild; his countenance meagre; his thoughts roving, and ſpeech diſconcerted. Inquiring the cauſe of this ſtrange alteration, I was informed, that, for ſeveral nights, he had not cloſed his eyes in ſleep. For want of which *noble reſtorative*; that ſprightly youth, who was once the life of the diſcourſe; and the darling of the company; is become a ſpectacle of miſery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures are, at this very inſtant, confined to the *bed* of *languiſhing*; and complaining, with that illuſtrious ſufferer of old, *Wearieſome nights are appointed to me* *! Inſtead of indulging ſoft repoſe, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every ſtriking clock; or meaſuring the very moments, by their throbbing pulſe. How many, *haraſſed* with *pain*, moſt paſſionately long to obtain ſome little truce from their agonies, in peaceful ſlumbers! How many, *ſick* with *diſquietude*, and reſtleſs even on their downy pillows, would purchaſe this tranſient oblivion of their woes almoſt at any rate!—That which wealth cannot procure, which multitudes ſigh for in vain, thy GOD has beſtowed on thee times out of number. The *welcome viſitant*, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch; has gently cloſed thy eye-lids, and ſhed his ſlumbrous dews over all thy ſenſes.

Since ſleep is ſo abſolutely neceſſary; ſo ineſtimably valuable; obſerve, what a *fine apparatus* almighty goodneſs has made, to accommodate us with the

* Job vii. 3.

balmy

balmy bleſſing. With how kind a precaution, he removes whatever might obſtruct its acceſs, or impede its influence! He draws around us the *curtain* of *darkneſs*; which inclines us to a drowſy indolence, and conceals every object that might too ſtrongly agitate the ſenſe. He conveys *peace* into our *apartments*; and impoſes ſilence on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread ſoftly, or rather to ceaſe from its motion, when man is retiring to his repoſe. —May we not diſcern in this gracious diſpoſition of things, the *tender cares* of a *nurſing-mother*; who huſhes every noiſe, and ſecludes every diſturbance, when ſhe has laid the child of her love to reſt? *So*, by ſuch ſoothing circumſtances, and gently working opiates, *He giveth to his beloved ſleep* *.

Another ſignal inſtance of a Providence intent upon our welfare, is, that we are preſerved *ſafe* in the hours of *ſlumber*. How are we then loſt to all apprehenſion of danger; even though the murderer be at our bed-ſide, or his naked ſword at our breaſt! Deſtitute of all concern for ourſelves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own ſecurity. At theſe moments therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils: perils from the reſiſtleſs rage of *flames*: perils from the inſidious artifices of *thieves*, or the outrageous violence of *robbers*; without either vigilance to obſerve the foe, or ſtrength to reſiſt the aſſault: perils, from the *irregular workings* † of our own thoughts, and

* Pſal. cxxvii. 2.

† I think, it is referable only to a ſuperintending and watchful *providence*, that we are not hurried, when our imagination is heated, and our reaſon ſtupified by dreams, into the moſt *pernicious* actions. ——We have ſometimes heard of unfortunate perſons, who, walking in their ſleep, have thrown themſelves headlong from a window, and been daſhed to death on the pebbles. And whence is it, that ſuch diſaſtrous accidents are only *related* as pieces of news, not *experienced* by ourſelves, or our families? Were *our* minds more ſober in their operations, or more circumſpect in their regards? No, verily; nothing could be more wild, than their excurſions; none more inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, if *we have laid us down, and ſlept* in peace; it was, becauſe the LORD vouchſafed us the

and eſpecially from the incurſions of our ſpiritual enemy. What dreadful miſchief might that reſtleſs, that implacable *adverſary* of *mankind* work, were there not an inviſible hand to controul his rage, and protect poor mortals! what ſcenes of horror might he repreſent to our imaginations, and "ſcare us with "dreams, or terrify us with viſions *!" But the *Keeper* of *Iſrael*, who never ſlumbers nor ſleeps, interpoſes in our behalf; at once to *cheriſh* us under his wings, and to *defend* us as with a *ſhield*. It is ſaid of *Solomon*, "That threſcore valiant men were about his "bed; all expert in war; every one with his ſword "upon his thigh, becauſe of fear in the night †." But one greater than *Solomon*; one mightier than myriads of armed hoſts; even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength; he vouchſafes to watch over our ſleeping minutes, and to ſtop all the avenues of ill.——Oh! the unwearied and condeſcending *goodneſs* of our Creator! who *lulls* us to *reſt*, by bringing on the ſilent ſhades; and *plants* his own ever-watch-

the ſweet refreſhment; if *we roſe again* in ſafety; it was, *becauſe the LORD ſuſtained us* with his unremitted protection.

Will the candid reader excuſe me, if I add a ſhort ſtory, or rather a *matter* of *fact*, which I know to be true?—Two perſons that had been hunting together in the day, ſlept together the following night. One of them was renewing the purſuit in his dream; and, having run the whole circle of the chace, came, at laſt, to the fall of the ſtag. Upon this, he cries out with a determined ardor; *I'll kill him: I'll kill him:* and immediately feels for the knife, which he carried in his pocket. His companion, happening to be awake, and obſerving what paſſed, leaped from the bed; and being ſecure from danger, ſtood (for the moon ſhined into the room) to view the event. When, to his inexpreſſible ſurpriſe, the infatuated ſportſman gave ſeveral deadly ſtabs, in the very place, where, a moment before, the throat and the life of his friend lay.——This I mention, as a proof, that nothing hinders us, even from being *aſſaſſins* of *others*; or *murderers* of *ourſelves*; amidſt the mad ſallies of ſleep; only the *preventing care* of our heavenly Father.

* What a complete maſter that malignant ſpirit is, in exhibiting *viſionary repreſentations*, appears from his conduct towards CHRIST, on the high mountain; and that he is too ready, if not reſtrained by an over-ruling power, to employ his dexterity in *afflicting mankind*, is evident from his treatment of *Job*. See Luke iv. 5. Job vii. 14.

† Cant. iii. 7. 8.

ful

ful eye as our *centinel*, while we enjoy the needful repoſe.

REASON, now, reſigns her ſedate office; and *fancy*, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a *maze* of *vanity*. The head is crowded with falſe images, and tantalized with the moſt ridiculous miſapprehenſions of things. Some are expatiating amidſt *fairy-fields*, and gathering garlands of viſionary bliſs; while their bodies are ſtretched on a wiſp of ſtraw, and ſheltered by the cob-webs of a barn. Others, quite inſenſible of their rooms of ſtate, are mourning in a *doleful dungeon*, or ſtruggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with haſty ſteps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with *real* anxiety, fly from the *imaginary* danger. Or elſe, benumbed with ſudden fear, and finding themſelves unable to eſcape, they give up at once their hopes, and their efforts; and though reclined on a couch of ivory, are ſinking, all helpleſs and diſtreſſed, in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *vagaries* of the *brain*, while ſleep maintains its dominion over the limbs!

But is this the only ſeaſon, when abſurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are there not thoſe who *dream*, even in their *waking* moments?—Some pride themſelves in a notion of *ſuperior excellency*, becauſe the royal favour has annexed a few ſplendid titles to their names; or becauſe the dying ſilk-worm has bequeathed her fineſt threads, to cover their nakedneſs.—Others congratulate their own *ſignal happineſs*, becauſe loads of golden lumber are amaſſed together in their coffers; or promiſe themſelves a moſt ſuperlative felicity indeed, when ſome thouſands more are added to the uſeleſs heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *ſubſtantial* ſatisfaction from *airy* applauſe; and flatter themſelves with, I know not what, immortality in the momentary buz of renown. Are any of theſe a whit more reaſonable in their *opinions*, than the poor ragged wretch in his *reveries*; who, while ſnoring under a hedge,

hedge, exults in the poſſeſſion of his ſtately palace, and ſumptuous furniture?——If perſons who are *very vaſſals* to their own *domineering* paſſions, and led captive by numberleſs temptations: if theſe perſons pique themſelves with a conceit of their *liberty*, and fancy themſelves the *generous* and *gallant* ſpirits of the age; where is the difference between theirs and the madman's phrenſy; who, though *chained* to the floor, is *throned* in thought, and wielding an imaginary ſceptre?—In a word, as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as ſend their ſouls to ſeek for bliſs in the blandiſhments of ſenſe, or in any thing ſhort of the divine favour, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance *; what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open; *delirious*, though in *health?*

Would you ſee their *picture*, drawn to the very *life*, and the ſucceſs of their *ſchemes* calculated with the utmoſt *exactneſs*; caſt your eye upon that fine repreſentation, exhibited by the prophet: *It ſhall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and, beheld, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his ſoul is empty: or as when a thirſty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his ſoul hath appetite* †. Such is the *race*, and ſuch the *prize*, of all thoſe *candidates* for *honour* and *joy*; who run wide of the mark of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. They live in vanity, and die in woe.—Awaken us, merciful LORD, from theſe *noon-tide trances!* Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not ſerve only to increaſe our torment. O! let our "eyes be enlightened, to diſcern the things "that are excellent;" and no longer be impoſed upon by fantaſtic appearances, which, however *pompous* they may ſeem, will prove more *empty* than the viſions

* *Theſe* give a ſacred, and home-felt delight,
A *ſober certainty* of *waking* bliſs. Milt. *Comus.*

† Iſ. xxix. 8.

ſions of the night, more *tranſient* than the dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned *ſleep* and *dreams*, let me once again conſider thoſe remarkable incidents of our frame; ſo very remarkable, that I may venture to call them a kind of experimental *myſtery*, and little leſs than a ſtanding *miracle*—Behold the moſt *vigorous conſtitution*, when ſtretched on the bed of eaſe, and totally reſigned to the ſlumbers of the night. Its activity is oppreſſed with fetters of indolence; its ſtrength is conſigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unſtrung, and the whole animal ſyſtem like a motionleſs log.——Behold a perſon of the moſt *delicate ſenſations*, and *amiable diſpoſitions*. His eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the viſual ray, at leaſt, diſtinguiſh not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the ſound; at leaſt, apprehend not the meaning. The ſenſes, and their exquiſitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable ſtupefaction. You call him a *ſocial* creature; but where are his ſocial affections? He knows not the father that begat him; and takes no notice of the friend, that is as his own ſoul. The wife of his boſom may expire by his ſide, and he lie unconcerned as a barbarian. The children of his body may be tortured with the ſevereſt pangs; and he, even in the ſame chamber, remain untouched with the leaſt commiſeration.——Behold the moſt *ingenious ſcholar*: whoſe judgment is piercing, and able to trace the moſt intricate difficulties of ſcience; his taſte refined, and quick to reliſh all the beauties of ſentiment and compoſition. Yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual œconomy quite diſconcerted. Inſtead of cloſe connected reaſonings, nothing but a disjointed huddle of abſurd ideas; inſtead of well-digeſted principles, nothing but a diſorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The moſt palpable deluſions, impoſe upon his imagination.

nation. The whole night paſſes, and he frequently miſtakes it for a ſingle minute: is not ſenſible of the tranſition, hardly ſenſible of any duration.

Yet, no ſooner does the morning draw back his curtain, and day-light fill the room, but he awakes, and finds himſelf *poſſeſſed* of all the valuable endowments; which, for ſeveral hours, were *ſuſpended* or *loſt*. He feels his ſinews braced, and fit for action: his ſenſes are alert and keen. The frozen affections melt with tenderneſs: the romantic viſionary brightens into the maſter of reaſon. And what is beyond meaſure ſurpriſing, the intoxicated mind works itſelf ſober, not by *ſlow degrees*: but in the *twinkling* of an eye, recovers from its perturbation.——Why does not the numbneſs, that ſeizes the animal powers, continue; and chain the limbs in a perpetual liſtleſs inability? Why does not the ſtupor that deadens all the nice operations of the ſenſes, hold faſt its poſſeſſion? When the thoughts are once diſadjuſted, why are they not always in confuſion? How is it that they are rallied in a moment; and, from the wildeſt irregularity, reduced to the moſt orderly array?—— From an *inactivity*, reſembling death; and from *extravagancies*, little differing from madneſs; how is the body ſo *ſuddenly* reſtored to vigour and agility? How is the underſtanding *inſtantaneouſly* re-eſtabliſhed, in ſedateneſs and harmony?——Surely, "this is "the LORD's doing, and it ſhould be marvellous in "our eyes;" ſhould awaken our gratitude, and inſpirit our praiſe.

THIS is the time in which *ghoſts* are ſuppoſed to make their appearance. Now the *timorous imagination* teems with phantoms, and creates numberleſs terrors to itſelf. Now dreary forms, in ſullen ſtate, ſtalk along the gloom; or, ſwifter than lightning, glide acroſs the ſhades. Now voices more than mortal * are

* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita ſilentes*
Ingens, & ſimulacra modis pallentia miris
Viſa ſub obſcurum noctis.—— Virg.

heard

heard from the echoing vaults, and groans iſſue from the hollow tombs. Now melancholy ſpectres viſit the ruins of ancient monaſteries, and frequent the ſolitary dwellings of the dead. They paſs and repaſs in unſubſtantial images, along the forſaken galleries; or take their determined ſtand over ſome lamented grave.—How often has the ſchoolboy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needleſs ſtep, in order to avoid the haunted *church-yard?* Or, if neceſſity, ſad neceſſity, has obliged him to croſs the ſpot, where *human ſkulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful yews* ſhed ſupernumerary horrors above; a thouſand hideous ſtories ruſh into his memory: fear adds wings to his feet; he ſcarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and bleſſes his good fortune, if no frightful ſound purred at his heels, if no ghaſtly ſhape bolted upon his ſight *.

It is ſtrange to obſerve the exceſſive timidity, that poſſeſſes many peoples minds on this *fanciful occaſion*; while they are void of all concern on others of the moſt *tremendous import*. Thoſe, who are ſtartled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the *very apprehenſion* of a ſingle ſpectre, are nevertheleſs unimpreſſed at the *ſure proſpect* of entering into a whole world of diſembodied beings. Nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themſelves to be haſtening into the preſence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit.—Should ſome pale meſſenger from the regions of the dead, draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and, appointing ſome particular place, ſay, as the horrid apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there* †: I believe, the boldeſt heart would feel ſomething like a panic; would ſeriouſly think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But when a voice from

* See that valuable poem, ſtiled THE GRAVE.

† The ſtory of *Brutus*, and his *evil genius*, is well known. Nor muſt it be denied, that the preciſe words of the ſpectre to the hero were, *I'll meet thee at* Philippi. But, as this would not anſwer my purpoſe, I was obliged to make an alteration in the circumſtance of *place*.

heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, *Prepare to meet thy GOD, O* Iſrael *; how little is the warning regarded! how ſoon is it forgot! Prepoſterous ſtupidity! To be *utterly unconcerned*, where it is the trueſt wiſdom to take the alarm; and to be *all trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible! ——Do thou, my ſoul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; "I will forewarn you, whom you ſhall "fear. Fear not theſe imaginary horrors of the "night; but fear that awful Being; whoſe revelation "of himſelf, though with expreſſions of peculiar "mercy, made *Moſes*, his favourite ſervant, tremble "exceedingly: whoſe manifeſtation, with purpoſes "of inexorable vengeance, will make *mighty conquerors*, that were familiar with dangers, and "eſtranged to diſmay; call upon the mountains to "fall on them, and the rocks to cover them: the "menace of whoſe majeſtic eye, when he comes attended with thouſand thouſands of his immortal "hoſts, will make the very heavens cleave aſunder, and the world flee away.——O! dread his "*diſpleaſure*; ſecure his *favour*; and then thou "mayſt commit all thy other *anxieties* to the wind; "thou mayſt laugh at every other fear."

This brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of Job †: which is, I think, no inconſiderable proof of the *real exiſtence* of apparitions ‡, on ſome *very extraordinary* emergencies;

* Amos iv. 12. † Job iv. 12. 14. *&c.*

‡ *Proof of the real exiſtence of apparitions.*——if the ſenſe in which I have always underſtood this paſſage be true.——*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a trance, nor in a dream, but perfectly awake. ——Though he ſpeaks of ſleep; he ſpeaks of it, as fallen not upon *himſelf*, but upon *other* men. He does not mention *dreams*, though חלומות *Somnia*, would have ſuited the verſe (if the book be in metre, altogether as well as חזיונים *Viſiones*.——It could not, I think, be a *wind*, as ſome tranſlate the word רוח. Becauſe, the circumſtance of *ſtanding ſtill*, is not ſo compatible, with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have paſſed *above* him; all *around* him, as well as *before* him; not to add, how low a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in ſo auguſt a deſcription, that he

could

gencies; while it diſcountenances thoſe legions of idle tales, which ſuperſtition has raiſed, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any time, thoſe viſitants from the unknown world, render themſelves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous conſequence; but, to *convey intelligences* of the utmoſt moment, or to *work impreſſions* of the higheſt advantage.

It was in the *dead of night*. All nature lay ſhrouded in darkneſs. Every creature was buried in ſleep. The moſt profound ſilence reigned through the univerſe. In theſe ſolemn moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and ſolitary, was muſing upon ſublime and heavenly ſubjects.——When, lo! an awful being, from the inviſible realms, burſt into his apartment *. *A ſpirit paſſed before his face*. *Aſtoniſhment* ſeized the beholder. His bones ſhivered within him; his fleſh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head ſtood erect with horror.——Sudden, and unexpected, was the *appearance* of the phantom; but not ſuch its *departure*. *It ſtood ſtill*, to preſent itſelf more fully to his view. It made a ſolemn pauſe, to prepare his

could not diſcern the form of a wind.——It ſeems, therefore, to have been a *real ſpirit*; either *angelical*, as were thoſe, which preſented themſelves to *Abraham* reſting at the door of his tent, and to *Lot* ſitting in the gate of *Sodom*; or elſe, the ſpirit of ſome *departed ſaint*, as in the caſe of *Samuel*'s apparition, or the famous appearance of *Moſes* and *Elijah* on the mount of transfiguration.——A ſpirit, aſſuming ſome *vehicle*, in order to become viſible to the human eye. Which, accordingly, *Eliphaz* ſaw, exhibiting itſelf as an object of ſight. But ſaw ſo *obſcurely* and *indiſtinctly*, as not to be able, either to deſcribe its *aſpect*, or to diſcern *whom* it reſembled.

* I have given this *ſolemn picture a modern dreſs*, rather for the ſake of variety and illuſtration, than from any apprehenſion of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am ſenſible, would be more abſurd, than to lacquer gold, or paint the diamond. The deſcription, in *Eliphaz*'s own language, is awful and affecting to the laſt degree. A *Night-piece*, dreſſed in all the circumſtances of the deepeſt horror. I queſtion, whether *Shakeſpeare* himſelf, though ſo peculiarly happy, for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing ſuperior or comparable to this. The judges of fine compoſition *ſee* the maſterly ſtrokes; and, I believe, the moſt ordinary reader *feels* them, chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

mind for ſome momentous meſſage.——After which, a *voice* was heard. A voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlaſting remembrance; for the ſolemnity of its delivery, enough to alarm a heart of ſtone. It ſpoke; and this was the purport of its words:—"*Shall* man, *frail* and wretched *man*, *be juſt before the mighty GOD? Shall* even *the moſt* upright and *accompliſhed of mortals be pure in the ſight of his Maker*? Behold*, and conſider it attentively. *He put no* ſuch *truſt in his* moſt exalted *ſervants*, as ſhould beſpeak them altogether incapable of defect, or authoriſe them to arrogate any honour to themſelves. *And his* very *angels*, without the leaſt injury to their character, *he charged with folly*; as ſinking, even in the higheſt perfection of their holineſs, infinitely beneath his tranſcendent glories; as falling, even in all the fidelity of their obedience, inexpreſſibly ſhort of the homage due to his moſt adorable Majeſty. And, if angelic natures muſt not preſume to juſtify either themſelves, or their ſervices, before immaculate and uncreated purity; *how much leſs* doth ſuch a carriage become *them*, *that dwell in houſes of clay*; whoſe original is from the duſt, and whoſe ſtate is all imperfection!"

I would obſerve from hence, the very ſingular neceſſity of that *poverty* of *ſpirit*, which entirely *renounces* its own attainments; and, conſequently, *ſubmits* to the righteouſneſs of the incarnate GOD. To inculcate this leſſon, the Son of the Bleſſed came down from heaven; and preſſed no other principle, with ſo

* There ſeems to be a ſignificant and beautiful *gradation* in the *Hebrew* words אנוש and גבר, which I have endeavoured to preſerve, by a ſort of *paraphraſtic verſion*.—The reader will obſerve a *new* turn given to the ſentiment, and much *nobler* than that which our *Engliſh* tranſlation exhibits. The paſſage, thus rendered, ſpeaks a truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated. A truth, exactly parallel to that humbling confeſſion of the prophet, *We are all as an unclean thing*; and to that ſolemn declaration of the Pſalmiſt, *In thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified. Vid. Schult. in loc.*

repeated

repeated * an importunity, on his hearers. To inſtil the ſame doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the lips of the apoſtles with ſacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commiſſion, "to bring "down every high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and laſting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom ariſes from the valley of the ſhadow of death, or a teacher deſcends from the habitation of ſpirits.——Whatever then we neglect; let us not neglect to cultivate *this grace*, which has been ſo variouſly taught, ſo powerfully enforced.

HARK! a *doleful voice*—With ſudden ſtarts, and hideous ſcreams, it diſturbs the ſilence of the peaceful night. It is the *ſcreech-owl*, ſometimes in frantic, ſometimes in diſconſolate accents, uttering her woes †. She flies the vocal grove, and ſhuns the ſociety of all the feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no charms for her. Obſcure ſhades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poiſonous adder hiſſes. The ſprightly morning, which awakens other animals into joy, adminiſters no pleaſure to this *gloomy recluſe*. Even the ſmiling face of day is her averſion; and all its lovely ſcenes create nothing but uneaſineſs.

So, juſt ſo, would it fare with the *ungodly*; were it poſſible to ſuppoſe their admiſſion, into the chaſte and

* It is well worthy of our obſervation, ſays an excellent commentator, That no one ſentence uttered by our LORD, is ſo *frequently repeated* as *this*; *Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted*; which occurs at leaſt *ten times* in the Evangeliſts.

† *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*
Sæpe queri, longoſque in fletum ducere voces.

Thus ſung that charming genius, that prince of the ancient poets, that moſt conſummate maſter of elegance and accuracy; all whoſe *ſentiments* are nature, whoſe every *deſcription* is a picture, whoſe whole *language* is muſic.——*Virgil.*

bright *abodes* of endleſs *felicity*. They would find nothing but diſappointment and ſhame, even at the fountain-head of happineſs and honour. For how could the tongue, habituated to *profaneneſs*, taſte any delight in joining the harmonious adorations of heaven? How could the lips, cankered with *ſlander*, reliſh the raptures of everlaſting praiſe? Where would be the ſatisfaction of the *vain beauty*, or the *ſupercilious grandee?* Since, in the temple of the ſkies, no incenſe of flattery would be addreſſed to the one; nor any obſequious homage paid to the other. The tranſcendent and immaculate purity of the bleſſed GOD, would *flaſh confuſion* on the laſcivious eye. And the envious mind, muſt be on a *rack* of ſelf-tormenting *paſſions*; to obſerve millions of happy beings, ſhining in all the perfections of glory, and ſolacing themſelves in the fulneſs of joy. In ſhort, the unſanctified ſoul, amidſt holy and triumphant ſpirits; even in the refined regions of bliſs and immortality; would be like this melancholy bird, *diſlodged* from her darkſome retirement, and *impriſoned* under the beams of day *.

The voice of this creature, ſcreaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our roof, is, they ſay, a *token* of approaching *death*. There are perſons who would regard ſuch an incident, with no ſmall degree of ſolicitude. Trivial as it is; it would

* I cannot forbear taking notice, with what admirable *emphaſis* and *propriety* our LORD touches this important point, in his memorable conference with *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he* cannot *enter into the kingdom of heaven*; q. d. "I wave the *authority* of the ſupreme Judge, and ſpeak with the inſtructive *condeſcenſion* of a maſter in *Iſrael*. Though I might, without being liable to the leaſt controul, paſs it into a ſovereign decree; that unrenewed mortals, who are ſlaves to corrupt appetite, SHALL NOT enter the habitations of the juſt; I rather chooſe to repreſent it, as a caſe *utterly impoſſible:* and charge the calamity, not upon *divine ſeverity*, but *human folly*. Such perſons, from the very nature of things, preclude themſelves; they incapacitate their own minds; and contrarieties muſt be reconciled, before *they*, in their unregenerate condition, *can* be partakers of thoſe ſpiritual and ſublime delights." John iii. 3.

damp

damp their ſpirits, and perhaps break their reſt.—One cannot but wonder, that people ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be affrighted at ſuch *fantaſtical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real* preſages of their diſſolution. Real preſages of this awful event, addreſs us from every quarter. What are theſe *incumbent glooms*, that overwhelm the world, but a kind of *pall* provided for nature; and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What an affinity has the ſleep *, which will very ſoon weigh down my drowſy eye-lids, with that ſtate of entire ceſſation, in which all my ſenſes muſt be laid aſide! The ſilent chamber, and the bed of ſlumber, are a very ſignificant repreſentative of the land where all things are huſhed; all things are forgotten.—— What meant that deep *death bell note*, which the other evening, ſaddened the air? Laden with heavieſt accents, it ſtruck our ears, and ſeemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely, it brought a meſſage to ſurviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the deſtroyer of your race is on his "way. The laſt enemy has begun the chaſe; "and is gaining ground upon you every moment. "His paths are ſtrewed with heaps of ſlain. Even "now, his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in "the duſt; and will ſoon, very ſoon, aim the *inevi-* "*table blow* at every one of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel houſe, nor carry our ſearch into the repoſitories of the dead; in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of theſe remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedleſs paſſengers to their long-home. I can hardly enter a conſiderable town, but I meet the funeral-proceſſion, or the mourners going about the ſtreets. The *atchievement* ſuſpended on the wall, or the *crape* ſtreaming in the air, are ſilent intimations; that both *rich* and *poor* have been emptying their houſes, and repleniſhing their ſe-

* *Et conſanguineus Lethi ſopor.* Virg.

pulchres,

pulchres. I can ſcarce join in any converſation, but mention is made of ſome that are given over by the phyſician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have juſt left their clay amidſt weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth. There is not a *newſpaper* comes to my hand, but, amidſt all its entertaining narrations, reads ſeveral ſerious *lectures* of *mortality*. What elſe are the repeated accounts, of age, worn out by ſlow conſuming ſickneſſes; and of youth, daſhed to pieces by ſome ſudden ſtroke of caſualty? Of patriots, exchanging their ſeats in the ſenate, for a lodging in the tomb; of miſers, reſigning their breath, and (O! relentleſs deſtiny!) leaving their very riches for others?—Even theſe vehicles of our amuſement, are regiſters of the deceaſed; and the voice of *fame* ſeldom ſounds, but in concert with a *knell*.

Theſe monitors croud every place; not ſo much as the ſcenes of our diverſions excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings, and the moſt elegant furniture of our parlours; but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble buſt; and thoſe gilded pictures; how ſolemnly they *recognize* the fate of others, and ſpeakingly *remind* us of our own!—I ſee; I hear; and Oh! I *feel*, this great truth. It is interwoven with my conſtitution. The frequent decays of the ſtructure, foretel its final ruin. What are all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs; what every diſeaſe, that has aſſaulted my health; but the *advanced guards* of the foe? What are the languors and wearineſs, that attend the labours of each revolving day; but the more *ſecret practices* of the adverſary, ſlowly undermining the earthly tabernacle.

Amidſt ſo many notices, ſhall we go on thoughtleſs and unconcerned? Can none of theſe prognoſtics, which are ſure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage our circumſpection? *Noah*, it is written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an ark*. O! imitate this excellent example. Admoniſhed by ſuch a cloud of

of witneſſes, be continually putting thyſelf in a readineſs for the laſt change. Let not that day, of which thou haſt ſo many infallible ſigns, come upon thee unawares.——Get the *ivy untwined*, and thy affections diſentangled from this enchanting world; that thou mayſt be able to quit it without reluctance. Get the dreadful *handwriting cancelled*, and all thy ſins blotted out; that thou mayſt depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the deciſive tribunal. Get, O! get thy ſoul *intereſted* in the *Redeemer's merits*, and *transformed* into his ſacred *image*; then ſhalt thou be meet for the inheritance of ſaints in light, and mayſt even deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with CHRIST.

SOMETIMES, in my evening-walk, I have heard

——The wakeful bird
Sing darkling, and, in ſhadieſt covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal note *.

How different the *airs* of this charming ſongſter, from thoſe harſh and boding *outcries!* The little creature ran through all the variations of muſic; and ſhewed herſelf miſtreſs of every grace, that conſtitutes or embelliſhes harmony.——Sometimes ſhe ſwells a manly throat, and her ſong kindles into ardour: the *tone* is ſo *bold*, and ſtrikes with ſuch energy, that you would imagine the ſprightly ſerenader in the very next thicket. Anon, the *ſtrain languiſhes*, and the mournful minſtrel melts into tenderneſs: the melancholy notes juſt ſteal upon the ſhades, and faintly touch your ear; or, in ſoft and ſadly-pleaſing accents, ſeem to die along the diſtant vale. Silence is all attention; and night liſtens to the trilling tale.

What an invitation is this, to ſlip away from the thronged city! This coy and modeſt minſtrel, entertains only the *lovers* of *retirement*. Thoſe, that are carouſing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous

* MILT. Par. Loſt, Book III. l. 38.

club,

club, loſe this feaſt of harmony.——In like manner, the pleaſures of religion; the joy of reconciliation with GOD; the ſatisfaction ariſing from the unbounded, raviſhing proſpect of a bliſsful immortality; theſe are all loſt to the mind, that is ever *in the croud*; and dares not, or delights not, to *retire into itſelf*.—Are we charmed with the nightingale's ſong? Do we wiſh to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? O! let us ſeek a renewed heart, and a reſigned will; a conſcience that whiſpers peace, and paſſions that are tuned by grace: then, ſhall we never want a melody in our *own breaſts*, far more *muſically pleaſing* than ſweet *Philomela*'s ſweeteſt ſtrains.

As different as the *voices* of theſe birds, are the *circumſtances* of thoſe few mortals, who continue awake.—Some are ſquandering pearls, ſhall I ſay, or kingdoms? No; but what is unſpeakably more precious, time. Squandering this ineſtimable talent, with the moſt ſenſeleſs and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a *few ſpare minutes*, for the purpoſe of neceſſary recreation; they laviſh many hours, devote *whole nights*, to that idle diverſion of *ſhuffling*, *ranging*, and *detaching*, a ſet of painted paſte-boards.—Others, inſtead of this buſy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themſelves *, and call it amuſement; they are torn by wild horſes, and yet term it a ſport. What elſe is the *gameſter's* practice, while his mind is held in the moſt *anxious ſuſpenſe*, and agitated by the *fierceſt extremes* of hope and fear? While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering; and, poſſibly, at the very next throw, the one ſinks in the gulph of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of diſtraction.

Some, ſnatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the *chamber* of *ſickneſs*. Where they are conſtrained (O ſad alternative!) either to plunge into the everlaſting world, in an *unprepared condition*; or elſe, to think over all the

* In alluſion to a very painful puniſhment, inflicted on delinquents among the ſoldiery.

follies

follies of a heedleſs life, and all the *bitterneſs* of approaching death. The diſeaſe rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch, to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouſe the conſcience, and point at the bottomleſs pit below.—Perhaps, his *drooping mother*, deprived long ago of the huſband of her boſom, and bereft of all her other offſpring; is, even now, receiving the blow which conſummates her misfortunes *. In vain, ſhe tries to aſſuage the ſorrows of a beloved ſon: in vain, ſhe attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life, dearer then her own. He faints in her arms; he bows his head; he drops in death. The laſt pang, which diſlodges the unwilling ſoul, rends an *only child*, from the yearning embraces of a parent; and tears away the ſupport of her age, from a diſconſolate widow.

While *thoſe* long for a reprieve; *others* invite the ſtroke. Quite weary of the world, with a reſtleſs impatience, they ſigh for a diſſolution. Some pining away under the *tedious decays* of an incurable *conſumption*; or gaſping for breath, and almoſt ſuffocated, amidſt an *inundation* of *dropſical waters*. On ſome a *relentleſs cancer* has faſtened its envenomed teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midſt of bodily vigour, in

* This brings to my mind one of the deepeſt and moſt affecting *mourning-pieces* extant in writing. The ſacred hiſtorian paints it in all the ſimplicity of ſtile; and yet in all the ſtrength of colouring.—When JESUS *came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow.*—What a beautiful gradation is here! every freſh circumſtance is an additional aggravation of the calamity: till, at length, the deſcription is worked up into the moſt finiſhed picture, of exquiſite and inconſolable diſtreſs. He was a *young man*: cut off in the flower of life, amidſt a thouſand gay expectations, and ſmiling hopes. He was an *only ſon*; the afflicted mother's all: ſo that none remained to preſerve the name, or perpetuate the family. And, what rendered the caſe ſtill more deplorable, *ſhe was a widow*: left entirely deſolate, abandoned to her woes, without any to ſhare her ſorrows, or comfort her under her misfortunes.——Is not this a fine ſketch of the *picturesque*? Who can conſider the narrative, with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiſeration? Luke vii. 12.

the

the midſt of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by *convulſive fits* of the *ſtone*. Oh! how the pain writhes her limbs; how the ſweat bedews their fleſh; and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks, the night condoles with theſe her diſtreſſed children; and ſheds *dewy tears* over their ſorrowful abodes.—— But, of all mortals, *they* are the moſt exquiſitely miſerable, who groan beneath the preſſure, of a *melancholy mind*; or ſmart under the laſhes, of a *reſentful conſcience*. Though robed in ermine; or covered with jewels; the ſtate of a ſlave chained to the gallies, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradiſe compared with theirs.

O! that the *votaries* of *mirth*; whoſe life is a continued round of merriment and whim; would beſtow one ſerious reflection on this *variety* of human *woes!* It might render them leſs enamoured with the few languid ſweets that are thinly ſcattered through this vale of tears, and are environed with ſuch a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their years with a giddy *rambling impulſe*; but to aſpire, with a *determined aim*, after thoſe happy regions, where delights abundant and unimbittered flow.

Can there be circumſtances, which a man of wiſdom would more earneſtly deprecate, than theſe ſeveral caſes of grievous tribulation? There are; and, what is very aſtoniſhing, they are frequently the deſire and the choice of thoſe, who fancy themſelves the ſole heirs of happineſs: thoſe, I mean, who are launching out into the *depths* of *extravagance*, and running exceſſive *lengths* of *riot*; who are proſtituting their reputation, and ſacrificing their peace, to their luſts: who are ſapping the foundations of their health in debaucheries; and ſhipwrecking the intereſts of their families, in their bowls: and, what is worſe, are forfeiting the joys of an *eternal heaven*, for the *ſordid* ſatisfactions of the beaſt; for the *tranſitory* ſenſations of an hour.—— O ye ſlaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your inordinate revels!

Ah!

Ah! little are you ſenſible; that while voluptuouſneſs ſhowers her roſes, and luxury diffuſes her odours; they ſcatter *poiſons* alſo, and ſhed unheeded *bane* *. Evils incomparably more malignant, than the wormwood and gall of the ſharpeſt affliction.—Since death is in the drunkard's cup; and worſe than poniards in the harlot's embrace; may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his ſhare of theſe *peſtilent ſweets* †!

ABUNDANCE of *living ſparks* glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I ſuppoſe they are the *glow-worms*; which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the abſence of the ſun, to play a feeble beam. A faint glimmer juſt ſerves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to diſſipate the ſhades, or making any amends for the departed day.—Should a traveller, dropping with wet, and ſhivering with cold, hover round this *mimicry* of *fire*; in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumbed limbs: ſhould ſome unfortunate rover, groping for his way in a black and dark night, take one of theſe *languid tapers*, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths: how certainly would both the one and the other be fruſtrated of their expectation! —And are *they* more likely to ſucceed, who neglecting that ſovereign balm, which diſtilled from the croſs; fly to any *carnal diverſion*, to heal the anxiety of the mind? Who, deaf to the infallible deciſions of revelation; reſign themſelves over to the erroneous *conjectures* of *reaſon*, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life! Or, laſtly, who apply to the *froth* of this

* Yes; in the flow'rs that wreathe the ſparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiſs, and pois'nous ſerpents roll. *Prior's Sol.*

† *Quam ſuave eſt ſuavitatibus iſtis carere!*—In this fine ſentence quoted from St *Auguſtine*, there is much the ſame beautiful turn, and noble ſentiment, as in thoſe lines of Mr *Pope*,

Count all th' advantage proſp'rous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from, and diſdains.

vain world, for a ſatisfactory portion, and a ſubſtantial happineſs? Their conduct is in no degree wiſer; their diſappointment equally ſure; and their miſcarriage infinitely more diſaſtrous. To ſpeak in the delicate language of a ſacred writer, "They ſow "the wind, and will reap the whirlwind *."

To ſay the truth; the pleaſures of the world, which we are *all* ſo prone to dote upon; and the powers of fallen reaſon, which *ſome* are ſo apt to idolize †; are not only vain, but treacherous. Not only a *painted flame*, like theſe ſparkling animals; but much like thoſe *unctuous exhalations*, which ariſe from the marſhy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted wayfaring man. Kindled into a ſort of fire, they perſonate a guide, and ſeem to offer their ſervice: but blazing with *deluſive light*, miſlead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulfs; where far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of ſuccour, the unhappy wanderer is ſwallowed up, and loſt.

NOT long ago, we obſerved a very ſurpriſing ap-

* Hoſ. viii. 7.

† I hope it will be obſerved, that I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reaſon, when exerted in her proper ſphere; and acting in a *deferential ſubordination* to the revealed will of Heaven. While ſhe exerciſes her powers within theſe appointed limits, ſhe is unſpeakably ſerviceable, and cannot be too induſtriouſly cultivated. —But, when ſhe ſets up herſelf in *proud contradiſtinction* to the ſacred oracles; when all-arrogant and ſelf-ſufficient, ſhe ſays to the word of ſcripture, *I have no need of thee*; ſhe is then, I muſt be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus*; not only a bubble, but a ſnare.

May not this remark, with the ſtricteſt propriety; and without the leaſt limitation; be applied to the *generality* of our modern romances, novels, and *too many* of our theatrical entertainments? Theſe are commonly calculated, to inflame a wanton fancy; or, if conducted with ſo much modeſty, as not to debauch the affections, they pervert the judgment, and bewilder the taſte. By their incredible adventures; their extravagant parade of gallantry; and their characters, widely different from truth and nature; they inſpire fooliſh conceits; beget idle expectations; introduce a diſguſt of genuine hiſtory; and indiſpoſe their admirers, to acquieſce in the *decent* civilities, or to reliſh the *ſober* ſatisfactions of common life.

pearance

pearance in the weſtern ſky. A *prodigious ſtar* took its flaming rout through thoſe coaſts; and trailed, as it paſſed, a tremendous length of fires, almoſt over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous ſtranger with much the ſame anxious amazement, as *Belſhazzar* beheld the handwriting upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody* * *flag*, hung out by divine reſentment over a guilty world. Some read, in its glaring viſage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms †. To others it ſhook, or ſeemed to ſhake, *peſtilence* and *war* from its horrid hair.—For my part, I am not ſo ſuperſtitious, as to regard what every aſtrologer has to prognoſticate upon the acceſſion of a *comet*, or the awful projection of its huge *vapoury train*. Nothing can be more precarious and unjuſtifiable, than to draw ſuch concluſions from ſuch events: ſince they are neither *preternatural* effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any *diſorder*. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled thoſe ſtupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them, by his providential eye, through unmeaſurable tracks of æther: who bids them now approach the ſun, and glow with unſufferable ardors ‡; now retreat to the utmoſt bounds of our planetary ſyſtem, and make their entry among other worlds.

THEY are harmleſs viſitants. I acquit them from the charge of cauſing, or being acceſſary to deſolating plagues. Would to GOD there were no other more formidable indications of *approaching judgments*, or

* ——*Liquida ſi quando nocte cometæ*
Sanguine lugubrei *rubent*. Virg.

† ——*Crinemque timendi*
Sideris & terris mutantem regna *cometem*. Lucan.

‡ "The comet in the year 1680, according to Sir *Iſaac Newton's* "computation, was, in its neareſt approach, above 166 times "nearer the ſun than the earth is. Conſequently, its heat was then "28000 times greater than that of ſummer. So that a ball of iron "as big as the earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in "50000 years." *Der. Aſtr. Theol.* p. 237.

impending ruin! But, alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almoſt epidemical: when the Sabbaths of a jealous God, are notoriouſly profaned; and that "name, which is great, wonderful, "and holy," is proſtituted to the meaneſt, or abuſed to the moſt execrable purpoſes: when the worſhip of the great Creator and Preſerver of mankind is baniſhed from many of the moſt *conſpicuous families*; and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence, ſo much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel interviews:* when it paſſes for an elegant freedom of behaviour, to ridicule the myſteries of Chriſtianity; and a ſpecies of a refined converſation, to taint the air with laſcivious hints; when thoſe that ſit in the *ſcorner's chair*, ſin with a high hand; and many of thoſe that wear the *profeſſor's garb*, are deſtitute of the power, and content themſelves with the mere form of godlineſs: when ſuch is the ſtate of a community, there is reaſon, too apparent reaſon, to be horribly afraid. Such *phænomena*, abounding in the *moral world*, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured GOD "be avenged on ſuch a nation "as this?" Will he not be provoked, to "ſweep "them with the beſom of deſtruction *?"

O! that the inhabitants of *Great Britain*, would lay theſe alarming conſiderations to heart! The LORD of hoſts has commanded the ſword of *civil diſcord* to return into its ſheath; but have we returned every one from his *evil ways?* Are we become a renewed people; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works?——What mean thoſe *peals* of *ſobs*, which burſt from the *expiring cattle?*——What mean thoſe melancholy moans, where the luſty droves

* Iſ. xiv. 23. The eternal Sovereign, ſpeaking of *Babylon*, denounces this threatening, I *will ſweep it with the beſom of deſtruction.* ——What a noble, but dreadful image, is here! how ſtrongly and awfully pourtrayed! how pregnant alſo in its ſignification! intimating at once the *vile nature*, the *total extirpation*, of this wicked people; and the *perfect eaſe*, with which the righteous GOD would execute his intended vengeance.

were

were wont to low *? What mean thoſe arrows of untimely deaths, diſcharged on our innocent and uſeful animals? Are not theſe the weapons of divine diſpleaſure, and manifeſt chaſtiſements of a ſinful generation †? Has not GOD, the "GOD to whom "vengeance belongeth," ſtill a controverſy with our land? And who can tell where the viſitation will end? What a ſtorm may follow theſe preluſive drops? O! that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed "it!" Taught by theſe *penal effects* of our diſobedience, may we remove the *accurſed thing* ‡, from our tents; our practices; our hearts! May we turn from all ungodlineſs, before wrath come upon us to the uttermoſt; before iniquity prove our ruin!

SOMETIMES, at this hour, another moſt remarkable ſight amuſes the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled; or ſome very extraordinary *lights* are refracted, *in the* quarters of the *North*. Sometimes the radiant ſtreamers meet and *mingle*, inſomuch, that the air ſeems to be all conflicting fire: at other times, they *ſtart* from one another; and like legions in precipitate flight, ſweep each a ſeparate way, through the firmament. Now, they are *quieſcent*; anon, they are thrown into a *quivering* motion; preſently, a nimble glance diffuſes them over the whole hemiſphere. Sometimes, with an aſpect *awfully ludicrous*, they repreſent extravagant and antic vagaries; at other times, you would ſuſpect, that ſome inviſible power was playing off the *artillery*

* If theſe papers ſhould be ſo fortunate, as to outlive their author, perhaps it may be needful to inform poſterity, that the abovementioned hints, allude to a moſt terrible, contagious, and mortal *diſtemper*; raging, at the time of writing them, among the *horned cattle*, in various parts of the kingdom.

† Hinc *lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,*
Et dulces animas plena ad præſepia reddunt.
Balatu hinc *pecorum, & crebris mugitibus amnes,*
Arenteſque ſonant ripæ, colleſque ſupini. Virg.

‡ Joſh. vi. 18.

of the *ſkies*, and giving us the flaſh without the noiſe.

The villagers gaze at the ſpectacle, firſt with wonder, then with horror. A general *panic* ſeizes the country. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crowds that flock together, inſtead of diminiſhing, increaſe the dread. They catch contagion from each others looks and words: while fear is in every eye, and every tongue ſpeaks the language of terror. Some ſee *hideous ſhapes*, armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields ſwimming with blood. Some foreſee *direful events*, ſtates overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, ſcared with ſtill more frightful apprehenſions, think of nothing but the *day* of *doom*. "Sure," ſays one, "the "unalterable hour is ſtruck, and the end of all things "come."—"See," replies another, "how the blaſted ſtars look wan! Are not theſe the ſigns of the "Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven?"—"JESUS, prepare us" (cries a third, and lifts his eyes in devotion) "for the Archangel's trump, and "the great tribunal!"

If this *waving brightneſs*, which plays innocently over our heads, be ſo amazing to multitudes; what inexpreſſible conſternation muſt overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the *general conflagration* commences? The day, the dreadful day, is approaching, "*In the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great* "*noiſe* *, *and the elements ſhall melt with fervent* "*heat*;

* 2 Pet. iii. 10. I have often thought this verſe an eminent inſtance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very *ſound* bears a ſort of *ſignificancy*; at leaſt, carries an exact correſpondence with the ſenſe. The original expreſſion—ροιζηδον—is one of the hoarſeſt and deepeſt words in language. Nothing could be more exquiſitely adapted to affect the *ear*, as well as impreſs the *imagination*, with the wreck of nature, and the criſh of a falling world.—I ſcarce ever read this clauſe, but it brings to my mind that admired deſcription in *Milton*.

——On a ſudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and *jarring ſound*,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges *grate*
Harſh thunder.—— Book II. l. 879.

It

" *heat; the earth alſo, and all the works that are* " *therein, ſhall be burnt up.*" That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the *magazines* of *fire*, and pour a *ſecond deluge* upon the whole earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, ſpread themſelves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withſtand their impetuoſity; nothing can eſcape their rage. Univerſal deſolation attends their progreſs. Magnificent palaces, and ſolemn temples, are laid in aſhes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, are mingled in one ſmoking maſs. Not only the productions of *human art*, but the works of *almighty power*, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlaſting mountains melt, like the ſnows which cover their ſummit. Even vaſt oceans, ſerve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the blaze. —O! how ſhall I, or others, ſtand undiſmayed amidſt the glare of a *burning world*; unleſs the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? How ſhall we be upheld in ſecurity, when the globe itſelf is ſinking in a *fiery ruin*; unleſs the Rock of ages be our ſupport?

BEHOLD! a new ſpectacle of wonder! The *moon* is making her entry into the ſky. See her riſing in *clouded majeſty*: all grand and ſtately, but ſomewhat ſullied in her aſpect. However, ſhe *brightens* as ſhe *advances*; and grows clearer, as ſhe climbs higher: till, at length, her ſilver loſes all its droſs; ſhe unvails her peerleſs light; and becomes " the beauty of hea-" ven, the glory of the ſtars *;" delighting every eye, and chearing the whole world, with the bright-

It is a pleaſing employ, and one of the nobleſt offices of true criticiſm, to point out theſe inferior recommendations of the *ſacred claſſics*. Though, I believe, the inſpired writers themſelves, amidſt all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, diſdained a ſcrupulous attention to ſuch *little niceties* of ſtile.

* Eccluſ xliii 9.
——— *Lucidum cæli decus.* Hor.

neſs

neſs of her appearance, and the ſoftneſs of her ſplendors!—O! thou *queen* of the *ſhades!* may it be my ambition, to follow this thy inſtructive example! While others are fond to tranſcribe the *faſhions* of *little courts*, and to mimic perſonages of inferior ſtate; be it mine, to imitate *thy improving purity!* May my conduct become more unblemiſhed, and my temper more refined; as I proceed, farther and farther, in my probationary courſe! May every ſordid deſire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually loſt, as I make nearer approaches to the celeſtial manſions! Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too ſhall ſhine, in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? Shine with a *richer* luſtre, than that which radiates from thy reſplendent orb: ſhine, with an *unfading* luſtre, when every ray, that beams from thy beauteous ſphere, is totally extinguiſhed.

THE day afforded us a variety of entertaining ſights. Theſe were all withdrawn at the approach of darkneſs. The ſtars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their aid. This ſerved to *alleviate* the *frown* of night; not to *recover* the objects from their *obſcurity*. A faint ray, ſcarcely reflected, and not from the entire ſurface of things, gave the ſtraining eye a very imperfect glimpſe; ſuch as rather mocked, than ſatisfied viſion.——But now the moon is riſen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is again taken off from the countenance of nature. We once again behold the world's great picture: not indeed in its late lively colours, but more *delicately ſhaded*, and arrayed in *ſofter charms* *.

What a *majeſtic ſcene* is here! How incomparably grand, and exquiſitely fine!——The moon, like an immenſe cryſtal lamp, pendent in the magnificent cieling of the heavens. The ſtars, like ſo many thouſands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure ſockets;

* ———Now reigns
Full-orb'd the moon, and with more pleaſing light
Shadowy ſets off the face of things. *Milton.*

all

all pouring their luſtre on ſpacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the foreſt; and opening a proſpect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint *.——We are forward to admire the performances of human art. A landſkip, elegantly deſigned, and ſketched out with a maſterly hand; a piece of ſtatuary, that ſeems, amidſt all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude, to ſoften into fleſh, and almoſt breathe with life; theſe little *imitations* of nature, we behold with a pleaſing ſurpriſe. And ſhall we be leſs affected, leſs delighted, with the inexpreſſibly noble, and completely finiſhed *original?*——The ample dimenſions of *Ranelagh's* dome; the gay illuminations of *Vaux-Hall* grove; I ſhould ſcorn to mention on ſuch an occaſion, were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with thoſe *puny eſſays*, of finite ingenuity; and touched with no tranſport, at this *ſtupendous diſplay* of omnipotent ſkill? at the auguſt grandeur, and ſhining ſtateline ſs, of the firmament? that forms an alcove for ten thouſand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlaſting luminaries.——Surely, this muſt betray, not only a *total want* of *religion*; but the moſt abject littleneſs of mind, and the utmoſt *poverty* of *genius*.

* As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night;
O'er heav'ns clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales; the rocks in proſpect riſe;
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light. *Iliad* VIII.

I tranſcribe theſe lines, becauſe Mr *Pope* ſays, they exhibit, in the original, the fineſt *night piece* in poetry. And, if they are ſo beautiful in *Homer's* language, who can ſuſpect their ſuffering any diſadvantage from the pen of his admirable *tranſlator?*

THE

THE moon, is not merely "an *ornament* in the "high places of the LORD;" but of ſignal ſervice to the inhabitants of the earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkneſs! eſpecially, in the long abſence of the winter's ſun. Welcome, therefore, thrice welcome, this auſpicious gift of Providence, to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with ſilver the raven-coloured mantle of night.——How deſirable to have our ſummer-evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrancy of our gardens: eſpecially, when the ſultry heats render it irkſome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.——How chearing to the *ſhepherd*, the uſe of this univerſal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late conſigns them to their hurdled cots! How pleaſing to the *mariner*, as he ploughs the midnight main; to adjuſt the tackling, and explore his way, under the influence of this beaming ſconce!——For theſe, and other beneficial purpoſes, the hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the *ſtately branch* on high; and filled it with a ſplendor, not confined to a ſingle edifice, or commenſurate to a particular ſquare, but diffuſive as the whole extent of the hemiſphere.

The moſt faithful of our inferior ſervants are ſometimes tardy in their office; ſometimes negligent of their duty: but this celeſtial attendant is moſt *exactly punctual*, at all the ſtated periods of her miniſtration. If we chooſe to prolong our journey, after the ſun is gone down; the moon, during her whole *increaſe*, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to ſet out very early in the morning; the moon in her *decreaſe*, prevents the dawn, in order to offer her aſſiſtance. And, becauſe it is ſo pleaſant a thing, for the eyes to behold the light, the moon, at her *full*, by a courſe of unintermitted waiting, never fails to give us, as it were, a double day.——How apparently has the divine Wiſdom intereſted itſelf, in providing even for the *pleaſurable accommodation* of man! How deſirous, that he ſhould want no piece of commodious furniture; no kind of delightful

lightful convenience! And, in proſecution of theſe benevolent intentions, has annexed ſo valuable an appendage to the terreſtrial globe.—Juſtly, therefore, does the Pſalmiſt celebrate that admirable conſtitution, which ordained *the moon and the ſtars to govern the night*, as an inſtance of rich goodneſs; *of mercy which endureth for ever* *.

THE moon, it is confeſſed, is *no luminous body*. All the brightneſs, which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the ſun, and no more than tranſmiſſively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence, the morning-ſtar gilds her horn †; from thence, the planetary circles are crowned with luſtre; and from thence, the moon derives all her ſilver radiance.——It is pleaſing to reflect, that ſuch is the caſe with the *all-ſufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependent people*. We are repleniſhed from his fulneſs. What do we poſſeſs, which we have not received; and what can we deſire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing ſource of all good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unſpotted life, we ſee the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant reſurrection, the proof of bliſs and immortality. If we offend and fall ſeven times a-day; he is the LORD our *peace* ‡. If we are depraved, and our beſt deeds, very unworthy; he is the LORD our *righteouſneſs* ‖. If we are blind, and even brutiſh, in heavenly knowledge; he is the LORD our *wiſdom* §: his word diſpels the ſhades; his Spirit ſcatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkneſs into

* Pſal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to juſtify this expreſſion, obſerve, that the planet *Venus*, commonly called the morning-ſtar, is found, by our teleſcopes, frequently to appear *horned*; or to have a *creſcent* of light, ſomewhat like the moon, a little before, or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark, too deep and refined for my ſcheme; which proceeds only upon a *ſuperficial* knowledge, and the moſt *obvious* appearances of nature.

‡ Judg. vi. 24. ‖ Jer. xxiii. 6. § 1 Cor. i. 30.

day.

day. In ſhort, we are nothing, and "CHRIST is all." *Worſe* than *defective* in ourſelves, "we are *complete* in "him." So that if we ſhine, it is with delegated rays, and borrowed light. We act by a ſtrength, and glory in merits not our own.—O! may we be thoroughly ſenſible of our dependence on the Saviour! may we conſtantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by *indulging unbelief*, or *backſliding into folly*, withdraw our ſouls from his benign influences! Leſt we loſe our comfort, and our holineſs; as the fair ruler of the night loſes her ſplendor, when her urn is turned from its fountain *, and receives no more communications of ſolar effulgence.

THE moon is inceſſantly *varying*, either in her aſpect, or her ſtages.—Sometimes her face is all luſtre. Anon a radiant creſcent adorns her brow. Soon it dwindles into a ſlender ſtreak. Till, at length, all her beauty vaniſhes, and ſhe becomes a beamleſs orb. —Sometimes ſhe riſes with the *deſcending day*; and begins her proceſſion amidſt admiring multitudes. Ere long ſhe defers her progreſs till the *midnight-watches*; and ſteals, unobſerved, upon the ſleeping world.—Sometimes ſhe juſt appears, on the *edges* of the weſtern *horizon*; and drops us a ceremonious viſit. Within a while ſhe ſets out on her nightly tower, from the oppoſite regions of the eaſt; *traverſes* the whole *hemiſphere*; and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her ſway renders her preſence unneceſſary.—In a word, ſhe is, while converſant among us, ſtill waxing or waning, and "never continueth in one ſtay."

SUCH is the moon; and ſuch are all *ſublunary things*; expoſed to perpetual viciſſitudes. How often, and how ſoon, have the faint *echoes* of *renown* ſlept in

* Alluding to thoſe truly poetical lines in *Milton*,

Hither as to their fountain, other ſtars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.

Par. Loſt, B. VII. l. 364.

ſilence;

ſilence; or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! The ſame lips, almoſt with the ſame breath, cry, Hoſanna, and Crucify. ——Have not *riches* confeſſed their notorious uncertainty, a thouſand and a thouſand times? Either melting away, like ſnow in our hands, by inſenſible degrees; or eſcaping, like a winged priſoner from its cage, with a precipitate flight. —Have we not known the *bridegroom's cloſet*, an *antichamber* to the *tomb*: and heard the voice, that ſo lately pronounced the ſparkling pair huſband and wife, proclaim an everlaſting divorce; and ſeal the decree with that ſolemn aſſeveration; "Aſhes to "aſhes, duſt to duſt?"—Our *friends*, though the medicine of life; our *health*, though the balm of nature; are a moſt precarious poſſeſſion. How ſoon may the one become a corpſe in our arms; and how eaſily is the other deſtroyed in its vigour!—You have ſeen, no doubt, a ſet of pretty *painted birds*, perching on your trees, or ſporting in your meadows. You was pleaſed with the lovely viſitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you *enſure* the *continuance* of this agreeable entertainment? No, truly: at the leaſt diſturbing noiſe, at the leaſt terrifying appearance, they ſtart from their ſeats; they mount the ſkies; and are gone in an inſtant, gone for ever. Would you chooſe to have a happineſs, which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? If you would not be content with a portion, that is ſettled only for ſuch a *fortuitous term*, not of years, but of moments, O! take up with nothing earthly; ſet your affections on things above; there alone is "no variableneſs, or ſhadow "of turning."

JOB is not a more illuſtrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark.—— View him in his *private eſtate*, he heaps up ſilver as the duſt; he waſhes his ſteps in butter; and the rock pours him out rivers of oil.——View him in his *public character*, princes revere his dignity; the aged liſten to his wiſdom; every eye beholds him with de-

light; every tongue loads him with bleſſings.—View him in his *domeſtic circumſtances;* on one hand, he is defended by a troop of ſons; on the other, adorned with a train of daughters; and on all ſides, ſurrounded by "a very great houſehold."—Never was human felicity ſo conſummate; never was *diſaſtrous revolution* ſo ſudden. The lightning, which conſumed his cattle, was not more terrible, and ſcarce more inſtantaneous. The joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his "children are buried in death." The man of affluence is ſtript of his abundance; and he that was clothed in ſcarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable patriarch is the deriſion of ſcoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent providence, is become "a brother to dragons, a companion of owls."—— Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times; in all times; the wheel continues the ſame inceſſant whirl: and frequently thoſe, who are *triumphing* to-day, in the higheſt *elevations* of joy, to-morrow are *bemoaning* the inſtability of mortal affairs, in the very *depths* of miſery *.—— Amidſt ſo much fluctuation and uncertainty, how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor of the ſoul, ſure and ſtedfaſt? May thy lo-

* I believe, I may venture to apply, what the *Temanite* ſays of the affairs of the wicked, to all *ſublunary things;* as a true deſcription of their very *great inſtability.* Job xxii. 16. נחר יעק סורם rendered by *Schultens, Flumen fuſum fundamentum eorum. Their foundation* (or what they reckon their moſt ſolid and ſtable poſſeſſion) *is a flood poured out.*——Which is one of the *boldeſt images,* and moſt *poetical beauties,* I ever met with in any language, ſacred or prophane. In order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taſte of its beauty; you muſt ſuppoſe a *torrent* of waters ruſhing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a ſteep and craggy mountain. Then, imagine to yourſelf an *edifice,* built upon the ſurge of this rolling precipice; that has no other *baſis* than one of thoſe *whirling waves,* which conſtitute ſuch a headlong ſtream.—— Was there ever ſuch a repreſentation of tranſitory proſperity, tending, with inconceivable ſwiftneſs, unto ruin? Yet ſuch is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded upon JESUS, and a participation of his merits, who is the *Rock of ages;* on JESUS and his image, formed in our hearts, which is the *hope of glory.*

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ving-kindneſs, O God, be our preſent treaſure; and thy future glory our reverſionary inheritance! Then ſhall our happineſs not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "a light that *decreaſeth* in its perfection;" but like the ſun, when he goeth forth in his ſtrength, and knoweth no other change, but that of *ſhining more* and more unto the perfect day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying ſphere, I ſee a repreſentation, not only of our temporal advantages, but alſo of our *ſpiritual accompliſhments*. Such, I am ſure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call *my righteouſneſs*: and ſuch, I am apt to ſuſpect*, is the righteouſneſs of every man living. Now we exerciſe it, in ſome few inſtances; in ſome little degrees. Anon, ſin revives, and leads our ſouls into a tranſient, though unwilling captivity. Now we are *meek*; but ſoon a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our compoſure into a fretful diſquietude. Now we are *humble*; ſoon we reflect upon ſome inconſiderable, or imaginary ſuperiority over others, and a ſudden elatement ſwells our minds. Now, perhaps, we poſſeſs a

* I would not be underſtood, as meaſuring in this reſpect, *others* by *myſelf*; but as taking my eſtimate from the unerring ſtandard of ſcripture. And, indeed, proceeding on this evidence, ſupported by this authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare *ſuſpicion*. For, "there is not a *juſt* man upon earth, that doth good, "and *ſinneth not*;" ſays the Spirit of inſpiration by *Solomon*, (Eccl. vii. 20.)——Nay, ſuch is the purity, and ſo extenſive are the demands of the divine law, that an apoſtle makes a ſtill more humbling acknowledgment, "In *many* things we offend *all*." (Jam. iii. 2.)——And the *all-wiſe teacher*, who moſt thoroughly knew our frame, directs the moſt advanced, moſt eſtabliſhed, and moſt watchful Chriſtians, to pray daily for the forgiveneſs of their *daily treſpaſſes*.——To which teſtimonies, I beg leave to add, an elegant paſſage from the *Canticles*; becauſe it not only expreſſes the ſentiment of this paragraph, but illuſtrates it, by the very ſame ſimilitude. *She* (the church) *is fair as the moon, clear as the ſun*. Fair as the moon, the leſſer and changeable light, in her *ſanctification*: clear as the ſun, the greater and invariable luminary, in her *juſtification*. The inherent holineſs of believers being imperfect, and ſubject to many inequalities; while their imputed obedience is every way complete, and conſtantly like itſelf. Cant. vi. 10.

clean heart, and are warm with *holy love*: but, O! how eaſily is the purity of our affections ſullied; how ſoon the fervour of our gratitude cooled! And is there not ſomething amiſs, even in our beſt moments? Something to be *aſhamed* of, in all we *are*; ſomething to be *repented* of, in all we *do*?

With what gladneſs, therefore, and adoring gratitude, ſhould we "ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of our "incarnate GOD;" and *receive*, as a divine *gift*, what cannot be *acquired* by human *works**!—A writer of the firſt diſtinction, and niceſt diſcernment, ſtiles the obedience of our glorious Surety, an *everlaſting righteouſneſs* †. Such as was ſubject to no interruption, nor obſcured by the leaſt blemiſh; but proceeded always in the ſame uniform tenor, of the moſt ſpotleſs perfection.—This righteouſneſs, in another ſenſe, anſwers the prophet's noble deſcription; as its beneficial and ſovereign efficacy knows no end; but laſts through all our life; laſts in the trying hour of death; laſts at the deciſive day of judgment; laſts through every generation; and will laſt to all eternity.

SOMETIMES I have ſeen that reſplendent globe *ſtript* of her *radiance*; or, according to the emphatical language of ſcripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interpoſing with its opake body, intercepted the ſolar rays, and caſt its own gloomy ſhadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her ſickening orb; extinguiſhed, more and more, the remainders of light; till, at length, like one in a *deep ſwoon*, no comelineſs was left in her countenance; ſhe was totally *overſpread* with *darkneſs*.——At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful ſpectacle! Even of thoſe eyes, which diſregarded the empreſs of the night; or beheld her with indifference; when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, ſhe ſhed a ſofter day through the

* Rom. v. 17.——x. 3. † Dan. ix. 24.

nations.

nations. But now, under theſe circumſtances of diſgrace, they watch her motions with the moſt *prying attention*; in every place, her misfortune is the object of general obſervation; and the prevailing topic of diſcourſe in every company.

Is it not thus, with regard to *perſons* of *eminence*, in their reſpective ſpheres! Kings, at the head of their ſubjects; nobles, ſurrounded with their dependents; and (after names of ſo much grandeur, may I be allowed to add) miniſters, in their pariſhes*; are each in a conſpicuous ſtation. Their behaviour, in its *minuteſt* ſtep, eſpecially in any *miſcarriage*, will be narrowly ſurveyed, and critically ſcanned. Can there be a louder call, to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways?—Thoſe, that move in inferior life, may groſsly offend; and little alarm be given; perhaps no notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the leaſt ſlip in their conduct, the leaſt flaw in their character, will paſs undiſcovered. *Malice*, with her *eagle eyes*, will be ſure to diſcern them; while *cenſure*, with her *ſhrill trumpet*, will be as far from concealing them; as *calumny*, with her *treacherous whiſpers*, from extenuating them. A planet may ſink below the horizon; or a ſtar, for ſeveral months, withdraw its ſhining; and ſcarce one in ten thouſand perceive the loſs. But, if the moon ſuffers a tranſient eclipſe, almoſt half the world are ſpectators of her diſhonour.

Very different was the caſe, when, at this late hour, I have taken a ſolitary walk on the *Weſtern cliffs*. At the foot of the ſteep mountain, the ſea, all clear and ſmooth, ſpread itſelf into an immenſe plain, and held a watery mirror to the ſkies. Infinite heights above, the firmament ſtretched its azure expanſe; beſpangled with unnumbered ſtars, and adorned with the moon, "walking in brightneſs†." She ſeemed to contemplate herſelf, with a peculiar pleaſure; while the

* Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on an hill, cannot be hid, Matth. v. 14.

† Job xxxi. 26.

tranſparent ſurface, both received, and returned, her *ſilver image*. Here, inſtead of being covered with ſackcloth, ſhe ſhone with double luſtre; or rather, with a luſtre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various ſituations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour, in perſons of exalted rank. Their courſe, as it is nobly *diſtinguiſhed*, ſo it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffuſive ray; and be ambitious to reſemble a pattern ſo attracting, ſo commanding. Their amiable qualities will not *terminate* in themſelves: but we ſhall ſee them *reflected* from their families, their acquaintance, their retainers. Juſt as we may now behold another moon; trembling in the ſtream; glittering in the canal; and diſplaying its lovely impreſs, on every collection of waters.

THE moon, philoſophy ſays, is a ſort of *ſovereign* over the *great deep*. Her orb, like a royal ſceptre, ſways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It ſwells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow. By which means, the liquid element purges of its filth; and is preſerved from being putrified itſelf, and from poiſoning the world.——Is the moon thus *operative* on the vaſt abyſs? And ſhall not the *faith* of eternal and infinite delights to come, be equally efficacious on this ſoul of mine?——Far above her argent fields are treaſures of *happineſs*, unſeen by mortal eye; by mortal ear unheard; and unconceived by any human imagination. In that deſirable world, the moſt diſtinguiſhed *honours* alſo are conferred; in compariſon with which, the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs, are empty pageants, and childiſh toys. Yonder arch of ſapphire, with all its ſpangles of gold, is but the floor of thoſe divine abodes. What then are the apartments; what is the palace? how bright with glories; how rich with bliſs?

O! ye manſions of bleſſedneſs; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom; that far outſhine theſe lamps of the

the viſible heaven; tranſmit your ſweet and winning invitations to my heart. *Attract*, and *refine*, all my affections. With-hold them from *ſtagnating*, on the ſordid ſhores of fleſh; never ſuffer them to ſettle upon the lees of ſenſe; but impreſs them with *emotions* of reſtleſs *deſire*, after ſublime and celeſtial joys.—— Joys, that will proceed on in one everlaſting flow, when ſeas ſhall ceaſe to roll:—joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleaſure; when the moon, with her waxing ſplendors, ſhall chear our ſight no more.

ENOUGH for the preſent evening. My thoughts have been ſufficiently exerciſed, and my ſteps begin to be attended with wearineſs. Let me obey the admonition of nature; and give reſpite to my meditations, ſlumber to my eyes.——But ſtay.—— Shall I retire to the bed of ſleep, with as little ceremony, and with as much inattention, as the brutes to their ſordid lair? Are no *acknowledgments* due to that divine Being, who has been the ſupport of my life, and the length of my days? Have I no farther need of his *protecting* care; no more occaſion for the bleſſings of his goodneſs?—— *Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended knee; and have a thouſand darts of raillery, ready to be diſcharged on the practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unmercifully ſevere on what *they* call, the drudgery of prayer, and the fantaſtical rant of praiſe. Theſe they live to the illiterate labourer, and mean mechanic; or treat them, with a contemptuous ſneer, as the parſon's ignoble trade.

Is it then an inſtance of *ſuperſtitious* blindneſs, to diſtinguiſh; or, of *whimſical* zeal, to celebrate; the moſt ſupereminent merit? Is it an *ungraceful* buſineſs; or does it argue a *grovelling* diſpoſition; to magnify goodneſs, tranſcendently rich and diffuſive? Is it only for the *inferior herd*, to admire the moſt conſummate excellence; only for *puſillanimous* creatures; to maintain an affiance on Almighty power?——What can be ſo truly becoming a *dependent ſtate*, as to pay

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our adoring homage, to the Fountain of perfection; and profeſs our devoted allegiance, to the ſupreme Governer of the univerſe? Can any thing more ſignificantly beſpeak an *ingenuous temper*; or adminiſter a more real ſatisfaction to its fineſt feelings; than the exerciſes of penitential piety? by which we give vent to an honeſt anguiſh: or melt into filial ſorrow; for our inſenſibility to the beſt of friends, for our diſobedience to the beſt of parents?——In a word; can there be a more *ſublime pleaſure*, than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the eternal Mind; the amiable Author of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent Giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and uſeful? Can there be a more *advantageous employ*, than to preſent our requeſts to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wiſdom, and all the faculties of our ſouls to the communications of his grace?—— It is ſtrange, unaccountably ſtrange, that the notion of *dignity* in ſentiment, and the purſuit of *refined* enjoyment, ſhould ever be diſunited from *devotion*. That perſons, who make pretenſions to an improved taſte, and exalted genius, ſhould neglect this moſt ennobling intercourſe, with the wiſeſt and beſt of Beings; the inexhauſtible ſpring of honour and joy.

Shall I be deterred, from approaching this ſource of the pureſt delight? Deterred, from purſuing this higheſt improvement of my nature? Deterred from all, by a *formidable* banter; or confuted by one *irrefragable* ſmile?——No; let the moon, in her reſplendent ſphere; and yonder pole, with all its ſtarry train; witneſs, if I be ſilent even or morn. If I refrain to kindle in my heart, and breathe from my lips, the reaſonable incenſe of praiſe. Praiſe to that great and glorious GOD, who formed the earth, and built the ſkies; who poured from his hand the watery world, and breathed the all-ſurrounding air abroad. —"Thou alſo made the night, Maker omnipotent! "and thou, the day! which I, though leſs than the "leaſt of all thy mercies, have paſſed in ſafety, tran-

"quillity,

" quillity, and comfort.——When I was loſt in the
" extravagance of dreams, or lay immerſed in the in-
" ſenſibility of ſleep; thy hand recovered me from
" the temporary lethargy, and ſtrung my *limbs* with
" recruited vigour: thy hand ſet a new, a delicately
" fine edge, on all my blunted *ſenſes*: and awakened
" my *thoughts*, when benumbed, into alacrity; re-
" duced them, when diſconcerted, into order: refit-
" ting me, at once, to diſcharge the duties of my
" ſtation; to reliſh the innocent entertainments of an
" *animal*, and to enjoy the ſublime gratifications of a
" *rational* capacity.——When darkneſs covered the
" face of the creation, at thy command the *ſun* aroſe,
" and darted its beams; painted the flowers, and di-
" ſtinguiſhed every object: gave light to my *feet*, gave
" direction to my *hands*, and gave nature, with all
" her beautiful ſcenes, to my *eye*.——To thee, O
" thou GOD of my life, I owe the *continuance* of my
" being, and the *vivacity* of my conſtitution. By
" thy ſacred order, without any conſciouſneſs of
" mine, the wheels of nature move within me, and
" the vital fountain plays. *Impelled* by thy power, the
" crimſon current flows through innumerable chan-
" nels; and never once miſſes its way; never once is
" interrupted in its courſe: when a ſmall obſtruction
" might be diſeaſe; or the burſting of a ſingle artery,
" death. *Over-ruled* by thy exquiſite ſkill, it tranſ-
" forms itſelf, by the niceſt operations of an inexpli-
" cable kind of chemiſtry, into a variety of the fineſt
" ſecretions: which glide into the muſcles, and ſwell
" them for action; or pour themſelves into the fluids,
" and repair their inceſſant decays; which cauſe
" chearfulneſs to ſparkle in the eye, and health to
" bloom in the cheek.

" *Diſaſtrous accidents*, injurious to the peace of my
" mind; or fatal to the welfare of my body; beſet
" my paths, in formidable ambuſh. But thy faith-
" fulneſs and truth, like an impenetrable ſhield, co-
" vered my head, and guarded me all around. Un-
" der this divine protection, I walked ſecure, amidſt

" legions

" legions of *apparent* perils; and paſſed unhurt
" through an unknown multiplicity of *unſeen* evils.
" Not one of my bones was broken; nor a ſingle ſhaft
" grazed upon my eaſe; even when the eye that
" watched over me, ſaw, in its wide ſurvey, *thouſands*
" *falling beſide me* in irrecoverable ruin; *and ten thou-*
" *ſands* deeply wounded by the arrows that flew *on*
" *my right hand.*——If *ſickneſs* has, at any time, viſit-
" ed my chamber, or *pain* harrowed my fleſh; it
" was a *wholeſome* diſcipline, and a *gracious* ſeverity.
" The chaſtiſement proved a ſovereign medicine, to
" cure me of an immoderate fondneſs for this im-
" perfect troubleſome ſtate; and to quicken my de-
" ſires after the unimbittered enjoyments of eternity.
" —Has not thy munificence, unwearied and un-
" bounded, ſpread my *table*; and furniſhed it with
" the fineſt wheat, repleniſhed it with *marrow* and
" *fatneſs?* While temperance ſweetened the bowl;
" appetite ſeaſoned the diſh; contentment and grati-
" tude crowned the repaſt.—Has not thy kindneſs, O
" GOD of the families of *Iſrael*, preſerved my affec-
" tionate *relations*; who ſtudy, by their tender offi-
" ces, to ſoften every care, and heighten every joy?
" and given me valuable *friends*, whoſe preſence is a
" cordial, to chear me in a dejected hour; and whoſe
" converſation mingles improvement with delight?

" When *ſin* lay lurking amidſt flowery ſcenes of
" pleaſure; enlightened by thy wiſdom, *I diſcerned*
" the latent miſchief; made reſolute by thy grace, I
" *ſhunned* the luſcious bane. If, through the impulſe
" of ſenſuality, or the violence of paſſion, I have
" been hurried into the ſnare, and ſtung by the ſer-
" pent; thy faithful admonitions have *recalled* the
" fooliſh wanderer; while the blood of thy SON has
" *healed* his deadly wounds. Some, perhaps, have
" been cut off in the midſt of their iniquities; and, to
" their inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment, tranſmitted from
" the thrillings of polluted joy, to the agonies of eter-
" nal deſpair: whereas, I have been diſtinguiſhed by
" long ſuffering mercy; and inſtead of lifting up my

" eyes

" eyes in torments, to behold a heaven irrecoverably
" loſt; I may lift them up under the pleaſing views
" of being admitted, ere long, into thoſe abodes of
" unutterable felicity.—In the mean time thou haſt
" vouchſafed me the *revelation* of thy will; the in-
" fluences of thy *Spirit*; and abundance of the
" moſt effectual *aids*, for advancing in knowledge,
" and growing in godlineſs; for becoming more con-
" formable to thy image, and more meet for thy
" preſence: for taſting the ſacred pleaſures of reli-
" gion, and ſecuring the unſearchable riches of
" heaven.

" How various is thy beneficence, O thou lover of
" ſouls! It has unſealed a thouſand ſources of good;
" opened a thouſand avenues of delight, and heaped
" bleſſings upon me, with a ceaſeleſs liberality. If
" I ſhould attempt to declare them, they would be
" more than the *ſtars*, which glitter in this unclouded
" ſky; more than the *dewy* gems, which will adorn
" the face of the morning.

" And ſhall I *forget* the God of my ſalvation, the
" author of all my mercies? Rather let my pulſe for-
" get to beat! Shall I render him *no expreſſions* of
" thankfulneſs? Then might all nature reproach
" my ingratitude.—Shall I reſt ſatisfied with the *bare*
" *acknowledgment* of my lips? No: let my *life* be
" *vocal*, and ſpeak his praiſe, in that only genuine,
" that moſt emphatical language—the language of
" devout obedience. Let the *bill* be drawn upon my
" very heart; let all my affections *acknowledge* the
" draught; and let the whole tenor of my actions,
" in time, and through eternity, be continually *pay-*
" *ing* the debt——the mighty debt of duty, venera-
" tion, and love.

" And can I, O thou guide of my goings, and
" guardian of all my intereſts——can I *diſtruſt* ſuch
" ſignal, ſuch experienced goodneſs? *Thou haſt been*
" *my helper*, through all the buſy ſcenes of day: *there-*
" *fore*,

" *ſore, under the ſhadow of thy wings* will I repoſe
" myſelf, during the darkneſs, the danger, and
" death-like inactivity of the night. Whatever
" defilement I have contracted, waſh it thoroughly
" away in redeeming blood; and let neither the ſinful
" ſtain, nor the ſinful inclination, accompany me to
" my couch!——Then ſhall *I lay me down in peace,*
" *and take my reſt;* chearfully referring it to thy all-
" wiſe determination, whether I ſhall open my eyes
" in *this* world, or awake in the unknown regions of
" *another.*"

The END.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

There dwells a noble pathos *in the ſkies,*
Which warms our paſſions, proſelytes our hearts:
How eloquently ſhines *the glowing pole!*
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonſtrating great truths *in ſtile ſublime!*
Night-Thoughts, No IX.

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N. B. It may ſeem unaccountable to an *unlearned* reader, that aſtronomers ſhould ſpeak ſuch *amazing* things; and ſpeak them with ſuch an air of *aſſurance*; concerning the diſtances and magnitudes, the motions and relations of the heavenly bodies. But the *exactneſs*, with which ECLIPSES are calculated; the inſtant of their *beginning*, and the time of their *continuance*, aſſigned; aſſigned, almoſt to the *nicety* of a moment, and what is ſtill more ſurpriſing, for the ſpace of *hundreds* or *thouſands* of years to come:——As this is a matter of *fact*, abſolutely indiſputable; it is alſo a very obvious, yet ſolid *demonſtration*, that the principles of ſcience, on which thoſe calculations proceed, are not mere conjecture, or precarious ſuppoſition only; but have a *real*, a *certain* foundation, in the nature and conſtitution of things.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS evening, I exchange the nice retreats of art, for the noble theatre of nature. Inſtead of *meaſuring* my ſteps, under the *covert* of an arbour; let me range along the *ſummit*, of this gently riſing hill.—There is no need of the leafy ſhade, ſince the ſun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his ſcorching beams. But ſee, how advantages and inconveniencies are uſually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the *annoying heat* ceaſes, the *landſkip*, and its pleaſing ſcenes, are alſo removed.—The majeſtic caſtle, and the lowly cottage, are vaniſhed together. I have loſt the aſpiring mountain, and its ruſſet brow; I look round, but to no purpoſe, for the humble vale, and its flowery lap. The plains, whitened with flocks, and the heath, yellow with furze, diſappear. The advancing night, has wrapt in darkneſs the long-extended foreſt; and drawn her mantle over the windings of the ſilver ſtream. I no longer behold that luxuriant fertility in the fields; that wild magnificence of proſpect, and endleſs variety of images; which have ſo often *touched* me with *delight*, and *ſtruck* me with *awe*, from this commanding eminence.

The loſs, however, is ſcarcely to be regretted; ſince it is amply compenſated by the opening beauties

of the ſky. Here, I enjoy a free view of the whole hemiſphere; without any obſtacle from below, to confine the exploring eye; or any cloud from above, to overcaſt the ſpacious concave. It is true, the lively vermilion, which ſo lately ſtreaked the chambers of the weſt, is all faded: but the *planets*, one after another, light up their lamps; the *ſtars* advance in their glittering train; a thouſand and a thouſand luminaries, ſhine forth in ſucceſſive ſplendors; and the whole firmament is kindling into the moſt beautiful glow. The *blueneſs* of the *æther*, heightened by the ſeaſon of the year, and ſtill more enlivened by the *abſence* of the *moon*, gives thoſe gems of heaven the ſtrongeſt luſtre.

One pleaſure more the invading gloom has not been able to ſnatch from my ſenſe, The night rather improves than deſtroys the fragrance which exhales from the *blooming beans*. With theſe, the ſides of this ſloping declivity are lined; and with theſe, the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her ſpicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of ſweets? And what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments, preſented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehenſions of danger. No poiſonous ſerpent lurks under the bloſſom; nor any ravenous beaſt lies, ready to ſtart from the thicket.——But, I wander from a far more exalted ſubject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too eaſily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention, from theſe little *blandiſhments* of the *earth*; ſince all the *glories* of the *ſky* invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the *Tombs*, and viewed the ſolemn memorials of the dead; in order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their ſoft enchantment. We have ſurveyed the *ornaments* of the *Garden*; not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race: but that theſe delicacies of a day might teach us to aſpire

aſpire after a better paradiſe; where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and ſought for wiſdom, not in the crowded city, or wrangling ſchools, but in the ſilent and lonely *walks* of ancient *Night* *.—Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raiſe our ſpeculations to thoſe *ſublimer works* of the great Creator; which the regions of the ſky contain, and this duſky hour unvails †.

If we have diſcerned the touches of his pencil, glowing in the colours of ſpring; if we have ſeen a ſample of his beneficence, exhibited in the ſtores of nature; and a ray of his brightneſs beaming in the blaze of day: O! what an infinitely richer field for the *diſplay* of his *perfections*, are the heavens! The *heavens*, in the moſt emphatical manner, declare the glory of GOD. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the moſt magnificent heralds of their Maker's praiſe. They ſpeak to the whole univerſe; for there is neither *ſpeech* ſo *barbarous*, but their language is underſtood; nor *nation* ſo *diſtant*, but their voices are heard among them ‡.—Let me then, when multitudes are buried in ſleep, liſten to their ſilent lectures. Perhaps I may receive ſuch impreſſive manifeſtations of "the eternal power and Godhead," as may *ſhed religion* on my ſoul, while I walk the ſolitary ſhades; and may be a tutelary *friend* to my *virtue*, when the call of buſineſs, and the return of light, expoſe me again to the inroads of temptation.

The *Iſraelites*, inſtigated by frenzy, rather than devotion, worſhipped the hoſt of heaven. And the pretenders to *judicial aſtrology* talk of, I know not what, myſterious efficacy; in the different aſpect of the ſtars, or the various conjunction and oppoſition

* Alluding to the ſeveral ſubjects of the three preceding eſſays.

† Night opes the *nobleſt ſcenes*, and ſheds an awe,
Which gives thoſe venerable ſcenes full weight,
And deep reception in th'entender'd heart.
Night-Thoughts, No IX.

‡ Pſal. xix. 3.

of the planets.——Let thoſe who are unacquainted with the ſure word of revelation, give ear to theſe ſons of deluſion, and dealers in deceit: for my part, it is a queſtion of indifference to me, whether the conſtellations ſhone with ſmiles, or loured in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let CHRIST be my *guard;* and, ſecure in ſuch protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let CHRIST be my *guide;* and I ſhall ſcorn to aſk, as well as deſpair of receiving any predictive information from ſuch lifeleſs maſſes. —What! ſhall "the living ſeek to the dead *?" Can theſe bodies advertiſe me of *future events*, which are unconſcious of their *own exiſtence?* Shall I have recourſe to unintelligent ſtupid matter, when I may apply to that all-wiſe Being, who, with one comprehenſive glance, diſtinctly views whatever is lodged in the boſom of immenſity, or forming in the womb of futurity?——Never will I ſearch for any *intimations* of my *fate*; but often trace my *Creator's footſteps* †, in yonder ſtarry plains. In the former caſe, they would be teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this therefore, this ſenſe only, I profeſs myſelf the pupil of the ſtars.

* Iſ. viii. 19.

† "It is moſt becoming (ſays a great author) ſuch imperfect "creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of GOD, with *this* "deſign, that we may diſcern the manifeſtations of wiſdom in "them; and thereby excite in ourſelves, thoſe devout affections, "and that ſuperlative reſpect, which is the very eſſence of praiſe; "as it is a reaſonable and moral ſervice."——*Abernethy on the Attributes.*——And, indeed, if we are ſincerely diſpoſed to employ ourſelves in this excellent, this delightful duty of praiſing the infinite Creator; the *means* and the *motives*, are both at hand. His works, in a wonderful and inſtructive variety, preſent themſelves; with *pregnant* manifeſtations of the moſt *tranſcendent* excellencies of their Maker. They pour their evidences from all quarters, and into all the avenues of the mind. They invite us, eſpecially in the magnificent ſyſtem of the univerſe, to contemplate——*counſel*, conſummately wiſe; and *execution* inimitably perfect:——*power*, to which nothing is impoſſible; and *goodneſs*, which extendeth to all, which endureth for ever.——To give, not a full diſplay, but only ſome *ſlight ſtrictures*, of theſe glorious truths, is the principal ſcope of the following remarks.

THE

THE vulgar are apprehenſive of nothing more, than a multitude of *bright ſpangles*, dropt over the æthereal blue. They have no higher notion of theſe fine appearances, than that they are ſo many *golden ſtuds*, with which the empyrian arch is decorated.—But ſtudious minds, that carry a more accurate and ſtrict inquiry among the celeſtial bodies, bring back advices of a moſt aſtoniſhing import. Let me juſt recollect the moſt material of thoſe *ſtupendous diſcoveries*; in order to furniſh out proper ſubjects for our contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, That the ſcene I am going to diſplay, is the workmanſhip of that incomprehenſible GOD, who is "perfect in knowledge, and mighty in power:" whoſe name, whoſe nature, and all whoſe operations, are "great and marvellous:" who ſummons into being, with equal eaſe, a ſingle grain, or ten thouſand worlds.—To this if we continually advert, the aſſertions, though they will certainly excite our *admiration*, need not tranſcend our *belief*.

THE earth is, in fact, a *round* body; however it may ſeem, in ſome parts, to be ſunk into *vales*, and raiſed in *hills* *; in other parts, to be ſpread into a ſpacious *plain*, extending to the confines of the heavens, or terminated by the waters of the ocean.———We may fancy, that it has deep *foundations*, and reſts upon ſome prodigiouſly ſolid baſis: but it is *pendent*, in the wide tranſpicuous æther;

* A learned writer, I think, Dr *Derham*, has ſomewhere an obſervation to this purpoſe——That the loftieſt *ſummits* of hills, and the moſt enormous *ridges* of mountains, are no real objection to the *globular* form of the earth. Becauſe, however they may render it, to our limited ſight, vaſtly uneven and protuberant; yet, they bear no more proportion to the *entire ſurface* of the terraqueous ball, than a *particle* of *duſt*, caſually dropt on the mathematician's globe, bears to its whole circumference. Conſequently, the rotund figure is no more deſtroyed in the one caſe, than in the other.——On the ſame principle, I have not thought it neceſſary, to take any notice of the comparatively ſmall difference, between the *polar* and *equatorial* diameter of the earth.

without

without any viſible cauſe, to uphold it from above, or ſupport it from beneath.—It may ſeem to be *ſedentary* in its attitude, and *motionleſs* in its ſituation: but it is continually *ſailing* *, through the depths of the ſky; and, in the ſpace of twelve months, finiſhes the mighty voyage. Which periodical rotation produces the ſeaſons, and completes the year.——As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it *ſpins* upon its own *centre*; and turns its ſides alternately to the fountain of light. By which means, the *day* dawns in one hemiſphere; while the *night* ſucceeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its regions would, during half the great revolution, be ſcorched with exceſſive heat, or languiſh under an unintermitted glare: while the other, expoſed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long oppreſſion of diſmal and deſtructive darkneſs.

I cannot forbear taking notice, that, in this compound motion of the earth, the one in no wiſe *interferes* with the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it not thus, with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the preſent life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they muſt *renounce* ſociety, if they devote themſelves to CHRIST, and abandon all the ſatisfactions of *this* world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of *another*. —But this is a very miſtaken notion, or elſe a very injurious repreſentation, of the doctrine which is according to godlineſs. It was never intended to drive men into deſarts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleaſant paths of wiſdom, into the bliſsful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to ſtrike off the wheels of *buſineſs*, or cut in ſunder the ſinews of *induſtry*; but rather to make men induſtrious, from a principle of *conſcience*, not from the inſtigations of

* With what amazing *ſpeed*, this veſſel, (if I may carry on the alluſion), filled with a multitude of nations, and freighted with all their poſſeſſions, makes her way through the ætherial ſpace; ſee page 100 in note.

avarice;

avarice; that ſo they may promote their immortal happineſs, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no deſign to extirpate our paſſions, but only to reſtrain their irregularities; neither would it damp the delights of ſenſe, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and ſubſiding into gall. —A perſon may be chearful among his friends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taſte the ſweets of his earthly eſtate; and, at the ſame time, cheriſh his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. The *trader* may proſecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the affairs of his ſalvation. The *warrior* may wear his ſword; may draw, in a juſt cauſe, that murderous weapon; and yet be a good ſoldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The *parent* may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treaſures, either of grace or glory.—So far is Chriſtianity from obſtructing any valuable intereſt, or with-holding any real pleaſure; that it evidently advances the one, and improves the other. Juſt as the *diurnal* and *annual* motions, are ſo far from *claſhing*, that they perfectly *accord;* and, inſtead of being deſtructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable benefits to nature.

To us, that dwell on its ſurface, the earth is by far the *moſt extenſive* orb, that our eyes can any where behold. It is alſo clothed with verdure; *diſtinguiſhed* by trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a ſpectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an *uniform* aſpect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a ſpot. To beings, who dwell at ſtill greater diſtances, it entirely diſappears.—That which we call, alternately, the morning, or the evening-ſtar; as in one part of her orbit, ſhe rides foremoſt in the proceſſion of night; in the other, uſhers in, and anticipates the dawn; is a *planetary world.* Which, with the four others, that ſo wonderfully va-

ry

ry their myſtic dance, are in themſelves *dark* bodies, and ſhine only by *reflection:* have fields, and ſeas, and ſkies of their own: are furniſhed with all accommodations for *animal* ſubſiſtence, and are ſuppoſed to be the abodes of *intellectual* life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand diſpenſer of divine munificence, the ſun; receive their light from the diſtribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

THE *ſun*, that ſeems to perform its daily ſtages through the ſky, is, in this reſpect *, *fixed* and immoveable. It is the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more ſpacious orbs, wheel their ſtated courſes.——The ſun, though ſeemingly *ſmaller* than the *dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger* † than this whole *earth;* on which ſo many lofty mountains riſe, and ſuch vaſt oceans roll. A line, extending from ſide to ſide, through the centre of that reſplendent orb, would meaſure more than eight hundred thouſand miles: a girdle, formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: and were its ſolid contents to be computed, the account would even confound our underſtanding, and be almoſt beyond the power of language to expreſs ‡.———Are we ſtartled at theſe reports of philoſophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a tranſport of ſurpriſe; How *mighty* is the *Being*, who kindled ſuch a prodigious fire; and keeps alive, from

* I ſay, *in this reſpect;* that I may not ſeem to forget or exclude, the revolution of the ſun round its own axis.

† A hundred thouſand times, according to the *loweſt* reckoning. Sir *Iſaac Newton* computes the ſun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth. *Religious Philoſopher*, p. 749.

‡ Dr *Derham*, after having calculated the dimenſions of the planets, adds, "Amazing as theſe maſſes are, they are all far outdone "by that ſtupendous globe of light, the ſun; which as it is the "fountain of light and heat, to all the planets about it, ſo doth it "far ſurpaſs them all in its bulk: its apparent diameter being com-"puted at 822,148 *Engliſh* miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and "its ſolid contents at 290,971,000,000,000,000." *Aſtro-Theolog.* Book I. chap. II.

age

age to age, ſuch an enormous maſs of flame?——Let us attend our philoſophic guides, and we ſhall be brought acquainted with ſpeculations, incomparably more inlarged and amazing.

This ſun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the univerſe. Every *ſtar*, though, in appearance, no bigger than the *diamond*, that glitters upon a lady's ring; is really a *vaſt globe*, like the ſun in ſize, and in glory; no leſs ſpacious, no leſs luminous, than the radiant ſource of our day. So that every ſtar is, not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent *ſyſtem*; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence. All which are loſt to our ſight, in unmeaſurable wilds of æther.——That the ſtars appear like ſo many diminutive, and ſcarce diſtinguiſhable *points*, is owing to their immenſe, and inconceivable *diſtance*. Immenſe and inconceivable indeed it is; ſince a ball, ſhot from the loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, muſt travel, at this impetuous rate, almoſt ſeven hundred thouſand years *, before it could reach the *neareſt* of theſe twinkling luminaries.

Can any thing be more wonderful than theſe obſervations? Yes: there are *truths* far more *ſtupendous*; there are *ſcenes* far more *unbounded*. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatneſs; ſo no imagination can ſet limits to his creating hand.—Could you ſoar beyond the moon, and paſs through all the planetary choir: could you wing your way to the higheſt apparent ſtar, and take your ſtand on one of thoſe loftieſt pinnacles of heaven: you would, there, ſee *other ſkies* expanded; *another ſun*, diſtributing his inexhauſtible beams by day; *other ſtars*, that gild the horrors of the alternate night, and *other* †, perhaps nobler

* See *Religious Philoſopher*, p. 819.——Where the exact computation is 691,600 years.

† See *Aſtro-Theology*, book II. chap. II.——Where the author, having aſſigned various reaſons, to ſupport this theory of our *modern*

bler *ſyſtems*, eſtabliſhed; eſtabliſhed, in unknown profuſion, through the boundleſs dimenſions of ſpace. —Nor does the dominion of the univerſal Sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the end of this vaſt tour, you would find yourſelf advanced no farther than the ſuburbs of creation; arrived only at the *frontiers* of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom *.

ARE we ſtruck with amazement, at this little *ſketch* of a very little *part* of his works? How then muſt we be loſt in wonder, at the conſideration of the *CREATOR himſelf!* Who is ſo high, that he looks down on the higheſt of theſe dazzling ſpheres, and ſees even the ſummit of creation in a vale: ſo great, that this prodigious extent of ſpace, is but a point in his preſence; and all this *confluence* of *worlds*, as the *lighteſt atom*, that fluctuates in air, and diſports in the meridian ray †.

O!

dern aſtronomers, adds—" Beſides (the forementioned) ſtrong pro-" babilities, we have this farther recommendation of ſuch an ac-" count of the univerſe, that it is far *more* magnificent, and *wor-" thy* of the infinite *Creator*, than any other of the narrower ſchemes."

* *Job*, after a moſt ſublime diſſertation, on the mighty works of GOD; as they are ſcattered through univerſal nature, from the heights of heaven, to the very depths of hell; cloſes the magnificent account, with this noble acknowledgment; *Lo! theſe are parts of his ways.* Or, as the original word more literally ſignifies, and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered; Theſe are only *the ſkirts*, the *very uttermoſt borders* of his works. No more than a ſmall preface to the immenſe volume of the creation——From the *Hebrew* קְצָוֹת—*extremitates*—I cannot forbear thinking on the *extreme* and very attenuated *fibres* of the root, when compared with the whole ſubſtance of the *truck*; or, on the *exquiſitely ſmall* ſize of the *capillary* veſſels, when compared with the whole ſtructure of the body. Job xxvi. 14.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a *ſcriptural beauty*; and a ſolid *correction* of the common *tranſlation*; made by that learned, ſagacious, and devout expoſitor *Vitringa*.—Iſ. xl. 15. We find it written of the Supreme Being, that *he taketh up the iſles, as a very little thing.* Which our critic obſerves, is neither anſwerable to the import of the original, nor conſonant to the ſtructure of the diſcourſe. The prophet had no intention to inform mankind, what the Almighty could *do*, with regard to the iſlands, if he pleaſed to exert his power: but his deſign was to ſhew, how inſignificant, or rather

O! thou ſublime and incomprehenſibly glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with awe, and ſunk into the loweſt proſtration of mind; when I conſider thy "*excellent greatneſs*," together with my own littleneſs and *inſignificancy!*——Is there not moſt abundant reaſon, to be even confounded at the remembrance; that, exceſſively mean as I am, I ſhould ever entertain one *conceited apprehenſion* of myſelf? ſhould feel the leaſt elatement of thought, in the preſence of ſo majeſtic and adorable a Being?———Were I poſſeſſed of all the *high perfections*, that accompliſh and adorn the angels of light; yet, amidſt all theſe noble endowments, I would fall down in the *deepeſt abaſement* at thy feet. Loſt in the infinitely ſuperior blaze, of thy uncreated glories; I would confeſs myſelf to be leſs than nothing, and vanity.——How much more ought I to maintain the moſt unfeigned humiliation, before thy Divine Majeſty; who am not only duſt and aſhes, but a compound of imperfection and depravity!

WHILE, beholding this vaſt expanſe, I learn my own extreme meanneſs; I would alſo diſcover the abject *littleneſs*, which is in all *terreſtrial things*.——What is the earth, with all her oſtentatious ſcenes, compared with this aſtoniſhing furniture of the ſkies? What, but a dim *ſpeck*, hardly perceivable in the *map* of the *univerſe?* It is obſerved, by a very judicious writer *, That if the ſun himſelf, which enlightens this part of the creation, was extinguiſhed; and all the hoſt of

rather what mere nothings *they are*, in his eſteem, and before his Majeſty.—The iſlands, ſays he, though ſo *ſpacious*, as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; though ſo *ſtrong*, as to withſtand, for many thouſands of years, the raging and reiterated aſſaults of the whole watery world; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, *ſmall* as the minuteſt grain, which the eye can ſcarce diſcern; *light* as the feathered mote, which the leaſt breath hurries away like a tempeſt.——אויבּרק יטול *Inſulæ ſunt ut leve quid, quod avolat. The* deep-rooted *iſlands are as the volatile atom, which*, by the gentleſt undulations of the air, *is wafted to and fro in perpetual agitation.*

* Spect. Vol. VIII. No 565.

planetary worlds, that move about him, were annihilated; they would not be miſſed, by an eye that can take in the whole compaſs of nature, any more than a grain of ſand upon the ſea-ſhore. The bulk of which they conſiſt, and the ſpace which they occupy, is ſo exceedingly little in compariſon of the whole; that their *loſs* would ſcarce leave a blank, in the immenſity of GOD's works.——If then, not our globe only, but this whole ſyſtem, be ſo very diminutive; what is a kingdom, or a county? What are a few *lordſhips*, or the ſo much admired *patrimonies* of thoſe, who are ſtiled wealthy *? When I meaſure them with my own little pittance, they ſwell into enormous dimenſions. But, when I take the boundleſs univerſe for my ſtandard, how ſcanty is their ſize, how contemptible their figure! They ſhrink into proud and *pompous nothings* †.

When the keen-eyed eagle ſoars above all the feathered race, and leaves her very ſight below: when ſhe wings her towering way up the ſteep of heaven; and, ſteadily gazing on the meridian ſun, accounts its *beaming ſplendors* all *her own*: does ſhe then regard, with any ſolicitude, the *mote* that is flying in the air, or the *duſt* which ſhe ſhook from her feet? And ſhall this eternal mind of mine, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory; which is intended to enjoy the viſions of his countenance: ſhall this *eternal mind*, endued with ſuch great capacities, and made for ſuch exalted ends, be ſo *ignobly ambitious*, *as to* ſigh for the tinſels of ſtate; or ſo *poorly covetous*, as to graſp after ample territories on a needle's point? ——O! no: while ſuch my conſiderations, I feel my ſentiments expand, and my wiſhes acquire a turn of ſublimity. Such vaſt ſurveys aſſimilate the ſoul, and make her truly great. My throbbing deſires after worldly grandeur die away; and I find myſelf, if not

* *Juvat inter ſidera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, & totam cum auro ſuo terram.* Senec.

† *Terrellæ grandia inania.* Watts' Hor. Lyr.

poſſeſſed

poſſeſſed of power, yet ſuperior to its charms.—Too long, muſt I own, have my affections been *pinioned* by vanity, and *immured* in this earthly clod. But theſe thoughts break the *ſhackles* *: theſe objects open the door of *liberty:* my heart, fired by ſuch noble proſpects, weighs anchor from this little nook, and coaſts no longer about its contracted ſhores; dotes no longer on its painted ſhells. The *immenſity* of *things* is her range; and an *infinity* of *bliſs* is her aim.

BEHOLD this immenſe expanſe, and admire the *condeſcenſion* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an inſpired and princely aſtronomer, improved his ſurvey of the nocturnal heavens. *When I conſider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt ordained*; I am ſmitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a tranſport of gratitude, *LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him* †? "How "amazing, how charming, is that divine grace, "which is pleaſed to bow down its *ſacred regards*, to "ſo fooliſh and *worthleſs* a *creature!* Yea, diſdains "not, from the height of infinite exaltation, to ex-"tend its kind providential care, to our moſt minute "concerns!——But that the everlaſting Sovereign "ſhould give his Son, to be our incarnate Saviour; "what a miracle is this of condeſcending goodneſs! "or rather, what are all *miracles*, what are all *myſte-"ries*, to this *ineffable gift!*"

Had the *brighteſt archangel* been commiſſioned to come down, with the olive-branch of peace in his hand; and to ſignify his eternal Maker's readineſs to be reconciled: on our bended knees, with tears of

* The ſoul of man was made to walk the ſkies,
Delightful outlet of her priſon here!
There, diſincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terreſtrial, ſhe can love at large;
There freely can reſpire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let looſe all her powers.
Night-Thoughts, No IX.

† Pſal. viii. 3. 4.

joy, and a torrent of thankfulneſs, we ought to have received the tranſporting news. But when, inſtead of ſuch an angelic envoy, HE ſends HIS *only begotten Son*; his Son beyond all thought illuſtrious, to make us the gracious overture:—ſends him from the "habitation of his holineſs and glory," to put on all the innocent *infirmities* of *mortality*, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:—ſends him, not barely to make us a *tranſient viſit*, but to abide *many years* in our inferior and miſerable world:—ſends him, not to exerciſe dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his *life* in the ignoble form of a *ſervant*; and, at laſt, to make his exit, under the infamous character of a *malefactor!* Was ever love like this? Did ever grace ſtoop ſo low *?——Should the ſun be ſhorn of all his radiant honours, and degraded into a *clod* of the vallies; ſhould all the dignitaries of heaven be depoſed from their thrones, and degenerate into *inſects* of a day; *great, great* would be the abaſement. But *nothing* to

* This reminds me of a very noble piece of *ſacred oratory*, where, in a fine ſeries of the moſt beautiful gradations, the apoſtle diſplays the admirably condeſcending kindneſs of our Saviour.——*He thought it no robbery*, it was his indiſputable right, *to be equal with* the infinite, ſelf-exiſtent, immortal GOD: *yet*, in mercy to ſinners, *he emptied himſelf* of the incommunicable honours, *and* laid aſide the robes of incomprehenſible glory.——When he entered upon his mediatorial ſtate, inſtead of acting in the grand capacity of univerſal Sovereign, he *took upon him the form of a ſervant*. And not the form of thoſe miniſtering ſpirits, whoſe duty is dignity itſelf; who are throned, though adoring.——He took not on him the nature of angels, but ſtooped incomparably lower. Aſſumed a body of animated duſt, *and was made in the likeneſs of men*; thoſe inferior *and* depraved creatures.——Aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion! but not ſufficient for the overflowing richneſs of the Redeemer's love. For, *being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf* farther ſtill. Occupied the loweſt place, where all was low *and* ignoble. He not only ſubmitted to the yoke of the divine law, but alſo bore the infirmities, and miniſtered to the neceſſities, of mortals. He even waſhed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head.——Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation, to the very deepeſt degrees poſſible abaſement. He *became obedient unto death*——and not to a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet; more tortuous than the rack——*even the* accurſed *death of the croſs*, Phil. ii. 6. 7. 8.

thine,

thine, moſt bleſſed JESUS; *nothing* to thine, thou Prince of peace; when for us men, and for our ſalvation, thou didſt not abhor the coarſe accommodations of the *manger*; thou didſt not decline even the gloomy horrors of the *grave*.

It is well the ſacred oracles have given this doctrine the moſt reiterated and inconteſtable evidence. Otherwiſe, ſo prodigious a favour muſt ſtagger our belief. —Could HE, who *launches* all theſe planetary globes through the *illimitable* void: and leads them on, from age to age, in their extenſive career: could HE reſign his hands, to be *confined* by the girding cord; and his back to be *plowed* by the bloody ſcourge?—Could HE, who crowns all the ſtars with inextinguiſhable *brightneſs*; be himſelf defiled with *ſpitting*, and diſfigured with the thorny ſcar? It is the greateſt of *wonders*, and yet the ſureſt of *truths*.

O! ye mighty orbs, that roll along the ſpaces of the ſky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vaſt dimenſions, and ample circuits. But now my amazement ceaſes; or rather, is entirely ſwallowed up by a much more ſtupendous ſubject. Methinks, your *enormous bulk* is ſhrivelled to an *atom*; your *prodigious revolutions* are contracted to a *ſpan*; while I muſe upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths, *of* this *love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS* *.

While I behold this vaſt expanſe, I ſee a mirror, that repreſents, in the moſt awful colours, the greatneſs of the Creator's glory, and the *heinouſneſs* of human *guilt*.—*Ten thouſand volumes*; wrote on purpoſe, to diſplay the aggravations of my various acts of diſobedience; could not ſo effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the conſideration of that *all-glorious Perſon* †; who, to make an atonement for them, ſpilt the laſt drop of his blood.——*I have*

* Eph. iii. 18. 19.

† *Quo quiſque altius aſcendit in agnitione* CHRISTI, *eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoſcet.*

ſinned, may every child of *Adam* ſay; *and what ſhall I do unto thee, O thou obſerver of men* *? Shall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul? Vain commutation! and ſuch as would be rejected by the bleſſed GOD, with the utmoſt abhorrence.—Will all the *potentates*, that ſway the ſceptre in a thouſand kingdoms, devote their ſacred and honoured lives, to reſcue an obnoxious creature from the ſtroke of vengeance? Alas! it muſt coſt more, vaſtly more, to expiate the malignity of ſin, and ſave a guilty wretch from hell. —— Will all the *principalities* of *heaven* be content to aſſume my nature, and reſign themſelves to death for my pardon †? Even this would be too mean a ſatisfaction,

* Job vii. 20. Not *preſerver*, as it ſtands in our verſion, but *obſerver of men*. Which phraſe, as it expreſſes the ſtrict and inceſſant *inſpection* of the divine eye; as it intimates the abſolute impoſſibility, that any tranſgreſſion ſhould *eſcape* the divine notice; is evidently moſt proper, both to aſſign the *reaſon*, and heighten the *emphaſis* of the context.

† *Milton* ſets this thought in a very poetical and ſtriking light. ——All the ſanctities of heaven, ſtand round the throne of the ſupreme Majeſty. GOD foreſees and foretels the *fall* of *man*; the *ruin*, which will unavoidably enſue on his tranſgreſſion; and the utter *impoſſibility*, of his being ever able to *extricate himſelf*, from the abyſs of miſery.

He, with his whole poſterity, muſt die;
Die he, or juſtice muſt; unleſs for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid ſatisfaction, death for death.

After which affecting repreſentation, intended to raiſe the moſt tender emotions of pity; the following inquiry is addreſſed to all the ſurrounding angels;

Say, heav'nly powers, where ſhall we find ſuch love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to ſave?
He aſk'd; but all the heav'nly choir ſtood mute,
And ſilence was in heav'n.——.

There is, to me at leaſt, an inimitable ſpirit and beauty in the laſt circumſtance.——That ſuch an innumerable multitude, of *generous*, and *compaſſionate* beings, ſhould be ſtruck *dumb* with *ſurprize* and *terror*, at the very mention of *the deadly forfeiture and ranſom ſet!* No *language* is ſo eloquent as this *ſilence*. Words could not poſſibly have

faction, for inexorable juſtice; too ſcanty a reparation of GOD's injured honour. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing, but a *victim* of *infinite dignity*, could conſtitute an adequate propitiation.——*He*, who ſaid, "Let there be light, and there was light;" Let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the ſky; *He* muſt take fleſh; HE muſt feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his ſoul in agonies, if ever ſuch tranſgreſſors are pardoned.

How vaſt is that debt; which all the wealth of both the *Indies* cannot diſcharge! How vitiated that habit of body; which all the drugs produced by nature herſelf, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy *condition*, O my ſoul! how much more *heinous* were thy *crimes?* Since nothing leſs than the ſufferings and death of Meſſiah, the Son of GOD, and radiant image of his glory, could *effect* thy *recovery*, or *cancel* thy *iniquity*.——Though, perhaps, thou art not ſunk ſo very deep in pollution, as ſome of the moſt abandoned profligates; yet remember the ineſtimable ranſom, paid to redeem thee from everlaſting deſtruction. Remember this, and "never open thy "mouth any more *," either to *murmur* at the divine chaſtiſements, or to *glory* in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even "*loath* thyſelf † for the "multitude of thy provocations," and thy great baſeneſs.

ONCE more: let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanſe; and conceive ſome juſter apprehenſions, of the unknown *riches* of my *Saviour's atonement*.——I am informed by a writer who cannot miſtake, that the High Prieſt of my profeſſion, who

have expreſſed, in ſo emphatical a manner, the *dreadful nature* of the taſk; the *abſolute inability* of any or all creatures to execute it; the ſuper-eminent and *matchleſs love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work; not only without reluctance, but unſought and unimplored; with readineſs, alacrity, and delight. *Paradiſe Loſt*, Book III. line 209. edit *Bentl.*

* Ezek. xvi. 63. † Chap. xxxvi. 31.

was

was alſo the ſacrifice for my ſins, is *higher than the heavens* *; more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly manſions, and all their illuſtrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled, at the conſideration of its exceſſive guilt; how do all my drooping powers revive, at this delightful thought! The poor criminal, that ſeemed to be *tottering* on the very brink of the infernal pit; is *raiſed*, by ſuch a belief, even to the *portals* of paradiſe. My ſelf-abaſement, I truſt, will always continue; but my fears, under the influence of ſuch a conviction, are quite gone †. I do not, I cannot, doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. *While I ſee a* glimpſe, of its matchleſs excellency; and *verily believe* myſelf, intereſted in its merits; I know not what it is, to feel any miſgiving ſuſpicions; but am ſtedfaſt in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that mighty ſum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuſer of the brethren, load me with invectives, before the dreadful tribunal; this one *plea*, *A divine Redeemer died*, moſt thoroughly quaſhes every *indictment*. For, though

* Heb. vii. 26.

† I am ſorry to find, that ſome of my readers were a little diſguſted at this expreſſion, "*My fears are quite gone.*" As thinking, it diſcovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to diſcourage the weak Chriſtian. But I hope, a *more mature* conſideration will acquit me, from *both* theſe charges.——For, what has the author ſaid? Only, that at ſome *peculiarly happy* moments, when the Holy Ghoſt bears witneſs of CHRIST in his heart, and he is favoured with a glimpſe of the Redeemer's matchleſs excellency,—— that, in theſe *bright intervals* of life, his trembling fears, with regard to the deciſive ſentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleaſing expectations. And what is there in ſuch a declaration, offenſive to the *ſtricteſt* modeſty, or diſpiriting to the *weakeſt* believer? Inſtead of ſtriking terror, it points out the way to obtaining a *ſettled* tranquillity. Its natural tendency is, to engage the ſerious mind in a *more conſtant* and *attentive* meditation, on the unknown *merits* of the divine MEDIATOR. And were we more *thoroughly* acquainted, more *deeply* affected, with his unutterable dignity; I am perſuaded, our uneaſy apprehenſions would *proportion bly* vaniſh; our faith be eſtabliſhed, our hopes brightened, and our joys enlarged.

there

there be much turpitude, and manifold tranſgreſſions, "there is no condemnation to thoſe that are in CHRIST "JESUS."—Nay, were I chargeable with all the vileſt deeds, that have been commited in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this moſt deplorable caſe, I need not ſink into deſpair. Even ſuch guilt, though grievous beyond all expreſſion, is not to be compared with the *abundance* of *grace* and righteouſneſs, which is in the *incarnate Divinity*.—How great, how tranſcendently glorious, are the *perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH! So great, ſo ſuperlatively precious, is the *expiation* of the dying JESUS. It is impoſſible for the human mind to *exalt* this atonement *, too highly; it is impoſſible for the *humble penitent* to *confide* in it, too ſteadily. The ſcriptures, the ſcriptures of eternal truth, have ſaid it, (exult, my ſoul, in the belief of it!), that the blood on which we have to rely, is GOD's *own blood* †; and therefore all-ſufficient to expiate, omnipotent to ſave.

David, that moſt egregious ſinner, but more exemplary ſaint, ſeems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable truth.—What elſe can be the import of that very remarkable, but devout declaration? *Thou ſhalt purge me* ‡ *with hyſſop, and I ſhall be*

* This doctrine, though rich with *conſolation* to the ruined ſinner; yet, is it not likely to open a door for *licentiouſneſs*; and embolden tranſgreſſors to proſecute their VICES?——No: it is the moſt powerful motive to that *genuine* repentance, which *flows* from an ardent love of GOD; and *operates* in a hearty deteſtation of all ſin, and an unfeigned deſire to *abound* in the works of obedience. One who knew the unmeaſurable goodneſs of the LORD, and was no ſtranger to the ſinful perverſeneſs of our nature, ſays, *There is mercy with thee:* THEREFORE *ſhalt thou be feared*, Pſal. CXXX. 4.—— Words, full to my purpoſe; which at once add the *higheſt* authority to *this ſentiment*, and direct our minds to its proper influence, and due improvement.

† Acts xx. 28.

‡ Pſal. li. 7. *Thou ſhalt purge.* I prefer this tranſlation before the new one. Becauſe, this ſpeaks the language of a more *ſtedfaſt belief*, and gives the *higheſt honour* to the divine goodneſs. Were the words intended to bear no more, than the common *petitionary* ſenſe; and not to be expreſſive of a noble *ulerophory* of *faith*; they would rather have been—חַטְּאֵנִי and כַּבְּסֵנִי *imperatives*, not *futures*.

clean ;

clean: thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.—"I have been guilty, I muſt confeſs, of the "moſt complicated and ſhocking crimes: crimes, in-"flamed by every aggravating circumſtance, with re-"gard to myſelf, my neighbour, and my GOD. "*Myſelf*, who have been bleſſed above men, and the "diſtinguiſhed favourite of Providence; *my neigh-"bour*, who, in the moſt dear and tender intereſts, "has been irreparably injured; *my* GOD, who might "juſtly expect the moſt grateful returns of duty, in-"ſtead of ſuch enormous violations of his law. "Yet, all horrid and execrable as *my offence* is, it is "nothing to the ſuperabundant *merit* of that *great "Redeemer*, who was promiſed from the foundations "of the world; in whom all my fathers truſted; "who is the hope of all the ends of the earth. "Though my conſcience be more *loathſome*, with "adulterous impurity, than the *dunghill*; though the "moſt barbarous of murders has rendered it, even "*black* as the gloom of *hell*; yet, waſhed in "the "fountain opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs *," I "ſhall be—I ſay not *pure only*, this were a diſparage-"ment to the efficacy of my Saviour's death; but I "ſhall be fair *as* the *lily*, and white *as* the *ſnow*. "Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object "of my confidence; cleanſed by this ſovereign ſtream, "I ſhall be *fairer* than the full-blown lily, *whiter* "than the new-fallen ſnows."

POWER, ſaith the ſcripture, *belongeth unto GOD* †. —And in what majeſtic lines is this attribute of JEHOVAH written, throughout the whole volume of the creation? Eſpecially, through thoſe magnificent pages, unfolded in yonder ſtarry regions. Which are therefore ſtiled, by the ſweet and ſublime ſinger of *Iſrael*, "The firmament of his power ‡." Becauſe the grand *exploits* of *Omnipotence* are there diſplayed, with the utmoſt pomp; and recorded in the moſt legible characters.

* Zech. xiii. 1. † Pfal. lxii. 11. ‡ Pfal. cl. 1.

Who,

Who, that looks upward to the midnight ſky; and, with an eye of reaſon, beholds its rolling wonders; can forbear inquiring, of *what* were theſe mighty orbs *formed?*——Amazing to relate! They were produced without materials. They ſprung from emptineſs itſelf. The *ſtately fabric* of univerſal nature emerged out of *nothing*.——What *inſtruments* were uſed by the ſupreme Architect, to faſhion the parts with ſuch exquiſite niceneſs, and give ſo beautiful a poliſh to the ſurface? With what were the various pieces of the complicated ſtructure *cemented*; and how was all *connected* into one finely proportioned, and nobly finiſhed whole?—A *bare fiat* accompliſhed all. LET THEM BE, ſaid GOD. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice aroſe; adorned with every beauty; diſplaying innumerable perfections; and declaring, amidſt admiring ſeraphs, its great Creator's praiſe. "By the *word* of the LORD were "the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the "*breath* of his mouth *."——What wonderful force *fixed* ſome of thoſe vaſt globes on an immoveable baſis! What irreſiſtible impulſe *bowled* others, through the dark profound? And what coercive energy *confined* their impetuous courſes, within the niceſt, ſtricteſt bounds?——Nothing but his *ſovereign will*. For all things were at firſt conſtituted, and all to this day abide, "according to his ordinance."

Without any toilſome aſſiduity; or laborious pro-

* If this thought is admitted a ſecond time, and ſuffered to ennoble the next paragraph; it is partly, becauſe of its unequalled *ſublimity*; partly, becauſe it awakens the moſt *grand idea* of creating power; and partly, becauſe the *practice* of the *pſalmiſt*, an authority too great to be controverted, is my precedent.——The beautiful ſtanza quoted from Pſal. xxxiii. 6. is a proof, how thoroughly the royal poet entered into the *majeſty* of the *Moſaic narration*: the repetition of the ſentiment, *verſ.* 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed with that *noble manner* of deſcribing the divine operations: while the turn of his own compoſition ſhews, how perfectly he poſſeſſed the ſame *elevated way* of thinking. And this long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated treatiſe, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Chriſtian world, to admire the *dignity of the Jewiſh legiſlator's ſtile*. Vide *Longin. de Sublim.* Sect. IX.

ceſs;

ceſs; to raiſe—to touch—to *ſpeak* ſuch a multitude of enormous bodies into *being*;——to *launch* them through the ſpaces of the ſky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant;——to impreſs on ſuch *unwieldy maſſes* a motion, far outſtripping the ſwiftneſs of the winged creation *;———and to *continue* them in the ſame *rapid whirl*, for thouſands and thouſands of years;——what an aſtoniſhing inſtance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impoſſible to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controuler of all the ends of the earth, all the borders of the univerſe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect *eaſe* to that glorious Being, who only ſpake, and the world was made †? Who only gave command, and the ſtupendous axle was lodged faſt, the lofty wheels moved complete?—What a ſure defence, O my ſoul, is this everlaſting ſtrength of thy GOD! Be this thy continual *refuge*, in the article of *danger*; this thy never-failing *reſource* in every time of *need*.

What cannot this uncontroulable power of the great JEHOVAH effect for his people? Be their miſeries ever ſo galling, cannot this GOD relieve them? Be their wants ever ſo numerous, cannot this GOD ſupply them? Be their corruptions within ever ſo inveterate; or their temptations without ever ſo importunate; cannot this mighty, mighty GOD, ſubdue the one, and fortify them againſt the other?——Should *trials*, with an inceſſant vehemence, *ſift* thee as wheat; ſhould *tribulation*, with a weight of woes, almoſt *grind*

* To give *one* inſtance of this remark.——The *earth*, in the diurnal revolution which it performs on its own axis, *whirls about* at the rate of above a thouſand miles an hour. And as the great orbit, which it deſcribes annually round the ſun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it muſt *travel* near a million and a half each *day*.—— What an *amazing force* muſt be requiſite, to protrude ſo vaſt a globe: and wheel it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains, and ponderous rocks, at ſuch a prodigious degree of rapidity! It ſurpaſſes human conception!—How natural, how pertinent, how almoſt neceſſary, after ſuch an obſervation, is the acknowledgment made by holy *Job*! *I know that* THOU *canſt do every thing, and that no thought can be with-holden from thee*, chap. xlii. 2.

† Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

thee

thee to powder; ſhould *pleaſure*, with her bewitching ſmiles, ſolicit thee to *delicious ruin*; yet, "hold thee "faſt by GOD," and lay thy help upon him that is omnipotent *. Thou canſt not be involved in ſuch *calamitous circumſtances*, or expoſed to ſuch *imminent peril*; but thy GOD, whom thou ſerveſt, is able to ſupport thee under the one, and to deliver thee from the other.—To *ſupport!* to *deliver!* O let me not diſhonour the unlimited greatneſs of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the *deepeſt diſtreſs*, to the moſt *triumphant joy*; and to make even a *complication* of

* It is a moſt *charming deſcription*, as well as *comfortable promiſe*, which we find in Iſ. xl. 29. 30. 31.——*He giveth power to the feeble; and to them that have no might* at all, *he* not only imparteth, but *increaſeth ſtrength*; making it to abound, where it did not ſo much as exiſt.——Without this aid of JEHOVAH, *even the youths*, in the very prime of their vigour and activity, *ſhall become languid* in their work, *and weary* in their courſe. *And the young men*, to whoſe reſolution and abilities nothing ſeemed impracticable, *ſhall* not only not ſucceed, but *utterly fall*, and miſcarry in their enterprizes—*Whereas they that wait upon the LORD*, and rely on his grace, ſhall preſs on, with a generous ardor, from one degree of religious improvement to another: inſtead of exhauſting, they *ſhall renew their ſtrength*; difficulties ſhall animate, and toil invigorate them; *they ſhall mount up*, as *with* ſoaring *wings*, above all oppoſition; they ſhall be carried through every diſcouragement, *as eagles* cleave the yielding air: *They ſhall run*, with ſpeed and alacrity, the way of GOD's commandments, *and not be weary: They ſhall hold on* with conſtancy and perſeverance, in thoſe peaceful paths, *and not faint*; but arrive at the end of their progreſs, and win the prize of their high calling.

To this moſt chearing doctrine, permit me to add its no leſs *beautiful* and *delightful contraſt*. *Eliphaz*, ſpeaking of the enemies of the righteous, ſays—לא רנחר קומנו—which is rendered by a great critic in ſacred learning, *Nihil exciſum factio nobis, adverſaria.*—We ſhould reckon our language acquitted itſelf tolerably well, if, when depreciating the abilities of an adverſary, it ſhould repreſent them weak as the *ſcorched thread*, feeble as the *diſſolving ſmoke*. But theſe are cold forms of ſpeech, compared with the eloquence of the Eaſt. According to the genius of our Bible, *All the power that oppoſes the godly, is* a mere nothing; or, to ſpeak with a more emphatical air of contempt, *a deſtroyed, an extirpating nothing.*——*Admire this expreſſion*, ye that are charmed with daring images, and (what *Tully* calls *verbum ardens*) a ſpirited and glowing diction.——*Remember* this *declaration*, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The *united force* of all your enemies, be it ever ſo *formidable* to the eye of fleſh, is, before your almighty Guardian, *Nihil nihiliſſimum*, not only nothing, but *leſs than nothing*, and vanity. Job xxii. 20.

evils *work together* for thy everlaſting good. *He is able*, not only to accompliſh what I have been ſpeaking, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk, or think* *.

O! the *wretched condition* of the wicked, who have this LORD of all power for their enemy! O! the *deſperate madneſs* of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealouſy!—Beſotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the liſts againſt incenſed Omnipotence? Can you *bear* the fierceneſs of his wrath, or ſuſtain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his preſence, though awfully ſerene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains "ſkip like frighted lambs." At the leaſt intimation of his diſpleaſure, the foundations of nature rock, and the "pillars of heaven tremble." How then can a *withered leaf* endure, when "his lips are full of in-"dignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire?"—Or can any thing *ſcreen* a guilty worm, when the great and terrible GOD ſhall *whet his glittering ſword, and his hand take hold on* inexorable *judgment?* When *that hand* which ſhoots the planets, maſſes of exceſſive bulk †, with ſuch ſurpriſing celerity through the ſky: *that*

* I ſhould, in this place, avoid ſwelling the notes any farther, was it not to take notice of the inimitable paſſage quoted above, and to be found Eph. iii. 20.——Which, if I do not greatly miſtake, is the moſt noble repreſentation of divine power, that it is poſſible for words to frame——To do all that our tongue can *aſk*, is a miracle of might. But we often think more than we can expreſs, and are actuated with "*groanings unutterable.*" Yet, to anſwer theſe vaſt deſires, is not beyond the accompliſhment of our heavenly Father.——Nay, to make all manner of bleſſings commenſurate to the *largeſt ſtretch* of human expectations, is a *ſmall thing* with the GOD of glory. He is able to do *above all*, that the moſt enlarged apprehenſion can imagine; yea, to do *abundantly* more, *exceeding abundantly* more, than the mind itſelf, in the *utmoſt exertion* of its faculties, is capable of *wiſhing*, or knows how to *conceive*.

† One of the planets (*Saturn*) is ſuppoſed to be more than 90 times as big as the globe on which we live. The largeſt of the planets (*Jupiter*) is reckoned above 200 times vaſter, than this vaſt collection of mighty kingdoms, ſpacious foreſts, towering mountains,

that hand which darts the comets to ſuch unmeaſurable diſtances, beyond the orbit of our remoteſt planet, beyond the purſuit of the ſtrongeſt eye; when THAT HAND is ſtretched out to *puniſh*, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of ſeas, or even interpoſing worlds, *divert* the blow?——Conſider this, *ambition;* and bow thy haughty creſt. Conſider this, *diſobedience;* and bend thy iron ſinew. O! conſider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a ſingle act of his will, lay the *univerſe* in utter ruin; and can he want power to bring *you*, in a moment, to the duſt of death, or to the flames of hell? He has,—I ſay not, ten thouſand lightnings to ſcorch you to aſhes; ten thouſand thunders to cruſh you into atoms; but, what is unſpeakably more dreadful,—he has an *army* of *terrors*, even in the *look* of his angry *countenance:* his very frown is worſe than deſtruction.

I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject, without admiring the *patience* of the bleſſed GOD. Who, though ſo "ſtrong " and powerful, yet is provoked every day."—Surely, as is his majeſty, ſo is his mercy, his pity altogether commenſurate to his power. If I *vilify* but the *name* of an earthly monarch; I loſe my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I *appear* in *arms*, and draw the ſword againſt my national ſovereign; my life is forfeited, and my very blood will ſcarce atone for the crime. But thee I have diſhonoured, O! thou King immortal and inviſible! againſt thee my breaſt has cheriſhed *ſecret diſaffection*; my behaviour has riſen up in *open rebellion:* and yet I am ſpared, I am preſerved. Inſtead of being baniſhed from thy preſence; I ſit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Inſtead of *purſuing* me with *thunderbolts* of vengeance, thy *favours ſurround* me on every ſide. That arm, that

tains, and boundleſs oceans.——Such enormous magnitude! winged with ſuch prodigious ſpeed!——It raiſes aſtoniſhment beyond expreſſion——*With GOD is terrible majeſty!* Job xxxvii. 22.——*Who ſhall not fear* THEE, O LORD, *and glorify thy name?* Rev. xv. 4.

injured arm, which might juſtly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head; is moſt graciouſly ſtretched out, to careſs him with the tendereſt endearments; to cheriſh him with every inſtance of paternal kindneſs.—— O thou mightieſt, thou beſt of Beings, how am I pained at my very ſoul, for ſuch ſhameful and odious diſingenuity! Let me always abominate myſelf as the baſeſt of creatures; but *adore* that unwearied long-ſuffering of thine, which refuſes to be irritated; *love* that unremitted goodneſs, which no acts of ingratitude could ſtop, or ſo much as check, in its gracious current. O! let this *ſtubborn heart*, which duty could not bind; which threatenings could not awe; be the captive, the *willing captive*, of ſuch triumphant beneficence.

I have often been ſtruck with wonder at that almighty ſkill, which weighed the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance; which *proportioned* the waters in the hollow of its hand, and *adjuſted* the duſt of the earth * by a meaſure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent œconomy, which *poiſed* the *ſtars* with inexpreſſible nicety, and *meted* out the *heavens* with a ſpan! Where all is prodigiouſly vaſt; immenſely various; and yet more than mathematical-

* *The duſt of the earth*, in this ſublime ſcripture, ſignifies the *dry land*, or *ſolid* part of our globe. Which is placed in contradiſtinction to the whole collection of *fluid* matter, mentioned in the preceding clauſe.——Perhaps, this remarkable expreſſion may be intended to intimate, not only the *extreme niceneſs*, which ſtated the dimenſions of the round world, *in general*, or in the groſs; but alſo that *particular exactneſs*, with which the very ſmalleſt materials that conſtitute its frame, (not excepting each individual atom), were calculated and diſpoſed:——*q. d.* It is a ſmall thing to ſay, No ſuch enormous redundancies, as unneceſſary ridges of mountains, were ſuffered to ſubſiſt. There was not ſo much as the leaſt grain of ſand *ſuperfluous*, or a ſingle particle of duſt *deficient*.——As the grand aim of the deſcription is, to celebrate the *conſummate wiſdom* exemplified in the creation; and to diſplay that *perfect proportion*, with which every part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the whole; I have taken leave to alter the word of our *Engliſh* tranſlation *comprehend*, and introduce in its ſtead a term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more ſignificative of the prophet's preciſe idea. Iſ. xl. 12.

ly

ly exact. Surely, the *wiſdom* of GOD manifeſts itſelf in the ſkies, and ſhines in thoſe lucid orbs: ſhines on the contemplative mind, with a luſtre incomparably brighter than that which their united ſplendors tranſmit to the eye.—Behold that countleſs multitude of globes; conſider their amazing bulk; regard them as the ſovereigns of ſo many ſyſtems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this ſuppoſition, what a multiplicity of mighty ſpheres, muſt be perpetually running their rounds in the upper regions! Yet, none miſtake their way, or *wander* from the goal, though they paſs through *trackleſs* and unbounded fields. None *fly off* from their *orbits*, into extravagant excurſions; none *preſs in* upon their *centre*, with too near an approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial paſſage; or *intercept* the kindly communications of another's influence *. But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony: keeping ſuch time, and obſerving ſuch laws as are moſt exquiſitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

While I contemplate this "excellent wiſdom which "made the heavens," and attunes all their motions; how am I abaſhed at that mixture of *arrogance* and *folly*, which has, at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *diſpenſations*, O LORD! what is this but a ſort of implicit treaſon againſt thy ſupremacy; and a tacit denial of thy infinite underſtanding?—Haſt thou ſo regularly placed ſuch a wonderful diverſity of ſyſtems, through the boundleſs univerſe?——Didſt thou, without any probationary eſſays, without any improving retouches, ſpeak them into the moſt conſummate perfection?——Doſt thou continually ſuperintend all their circumſtances, with a ſagacity that never miſtakes the minuteſt *title* of *propriety*? And ſhall I be ſo unaccountably ſtupid, as to queſtion the *juſtneſs* of thy *diſcernment*, in "chooſing my inheritance, and fixing

* The interception of light, by means of an *eclipſe*, happens very *rarely*: and then, is of ſo *ſhort* a *continuance*, as not to be at all inconvenient; is attended with ſuch *circumſtances*, as render it rather uſeful than prejudicial.

"the bounds of my habitation?"——Not a *ſingle erratum* in modelling the ſtructure; determining the diſtance *; and conducting the career of *unnumbered worlds!* and ſhall my peeviſh humour preſume to *cenſure* thy *interpoſition* with regard to the affairs of *one* inconſiderable *creature:* whoſe ſtature, in ſuch a comparative view, is leſs than a ſpan; and his preſent duration little more than a moment?

O! thou GOD, "in whoſe hand my breath is, "and whoſe are all my ways," let ſuch ſentiments as now poſſeſs my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! Theſe ſhall compoſe my mind into a *chearful* acquieſcence, and *thankful* ſubmiſſion; even when afflictions *gall* the ſenſe, or diſappointments *break* my ſchemes. Then ſhall I, like the grateful patriarch †, in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of diſtreſs, erect an *altar* of adoring reſignation; and inſcribe it with the apoſtle's *motto*, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, ſhouldſt thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly deſire to relinquiſh the grant, and recommit the diſpoſal of myſelf to thy unerring beneficence. Fully perſuaded that *thy counſels;* though contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my fleſh; are incomparably more eligible, than the *blind impulſe* of my own will, however ſoothing to animal nature.

ON a careleſs inſpection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the poſition of the heavenly bodies. They appear like an *illuſtrious chaos;* a promiſcuous

* The ſun in particular, (and let this ſerve as a ſpecimen of that moſt geometrical exactneſs, with which the other celeſtial bodies are conſtituted, and all their circumſtances regulated), the ſun is formed of ſuch a determinate magnitude, and placed at ſuch a convenient diſtance,—"as not to annoy, but only refreſh us, and "nouriſh the ground with its kindly warmth. If it was *larger*, it "would ſet the earth on fire: if *ſmaller*, it would leave it frozen. "If it was *nearer* us, we ſhould be ſcorched to death; if *farther* from "us, we ſhould not be able to live for want of heat." *Stackhouſe's Hiſtory of the Bible.*

† See Gen. xii. 7, 8.

heap

heap of ſhining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line.——But what *ſeems* confuſion, *is* all regularity. What carries a ſhew of negligence, is really the reſult of the moſt maſterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial flight; but they rove by the niceſt rule, and without the leaſt error. Their circuits, though ſeemingly *devious*; their mazes, though *intricate* to our apprehenſions *; are marked out, not indeed with *golden compaſſes*, but by the infinitely more *exact determinations* of the all-wiſe Spirit.

So, what wears the *appearance* of *calamity*, in the allotments appointed for the godly, has really the *nature* of a *bleſſing*. It iſſues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richeſt good. If *Joſeph* is ſnatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to ſlavery in a foreign land; it is in order to ſave the holy family from periſhing by famine; and to preſerve "the ſeed, in whom all the nations "of the earth ſhould be bleſſed." If he falls into the deepeſt diſgrace, it is on purpoſe that he may riſe to the higheſt honours. Even the *confinement* of the *priſon*, by the unſearchable workings of providence, *opens* his way to the right hand of the *throne* itſelf.—Let the moſt afflicted ſervant of JESUS, wait the final upſhot of things: and he will *then* diſcover the apparent expediency of all thoſe tribulations; which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit, without reluctance: or ſuffer, without ſome ſtruggles of diſſatisfaction. Then, the guſhing tear, and the heaving ſigh, will be turned into tides of gratitude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer tax the divine procedure; but, *adoring* where we cannot *comprehend*, let us expect the *evolution* of the myſterious plan. Then ſhall every eye perceive; that the ſeem-

* ——Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd; yet regular
Then moſt, when moſt irregular they ſeem. *Milton.*

ing

ing *labyrinths* of providence, were the moſt *direct* and *compendious* way; to effect his general purpoſes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happineſs *.——Then, alſo, ſhall it be clearly ſhewn, in the preſence of applauding worlds; why, virtue pined in want, while vice rioted in affluence: why, amiable innocence ſo often dragged the dungeon *chain*, while horrid guilt *trailed* the *robe* of ſtate.—That day of univerſal audit, that day of everlaſting retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole management of Heaven. The auguſt ſeſſions ſhall cloſe with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: "Though *clouds and darkneſs*, impenetrable by any "human ſcrutiny, *were* ſometimes *round about* the "ſupreme Conductor of things; yet *righteouſneſs and* "*judgment were the* conſtant *habitation of his ſeat* †; "the invariable ſtandard of all his adminiſtrations." —While we view (if I may illuſtrate the grandeſt truths, by inferior occurrences; while we view) the *arras*, on the ſide of *leaſt diſtinction*, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice ſtrokes of art; nothing but a confuſed jumble of incoherent threads. No ſooner is the piece beheld in its *proper aſpect*, but the ſuſpected rudeneſs vaniſhes, and the moſt curious arrangement takes place; we are charmed with deſigns of the fineſt taſte, and figures of the moſt graceful forms; all is ſhaped with ſymmetry; all is clad in beauty.

THE *goodneſs* of GOD is moſt eminently diſplayed in the ſkies.—Could we take an underſtanding ſurvey, of whatever is formed by the divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of *material* things; our minds would be charmed with their matchleſs ex-

* ———The *moral world*,
Which, though to us it ſeems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd
By *Wiſdom's* fineſt hand, and iſſuing all
In gen'ral good.——— Thomſ. *Winter*, l. 586. laſt edit.

† Pſal. xcvii. 2.

cellencies,

cellencies, and our tongues echo back that great encomium, They are "very, very good." Moſt *beautiful* * in themſelves; contrived by unerring wiſdom, and executed with inimitable ſkill: moſt *uſeful* * in their functions; exactly fitting the places they fill, and completely anſwering the purpoſes for which they were intended——All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their *intrinſic* and *relative* excellencies, the all-diffuſive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the diſplays of divine indulgence, in the worlds of *life!* Becauſe dead matter is incapable of delight; therefore, the gracious Creator has raiſed innumerable ranks of *perceptive exiſtence:* ſuch as are qualified to taſte his bounty, and *enjoy* each a *happineſs* ſuited to its peculiar ſtate. With this view, he furniſhed the regions of inferior nature, with a moſt numerous ſeries of ſenſitive beings. The *waters* teem with ſhoals of finny inhabitants. The *dry-land* ſwarms with animals of every order. The dwellings of the *firmament*, are occupied by multitudes of winged people. Not ſo much as a *green leaf*, philoſophers ſay, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants †.—And wherefore this diverſity,

* * This καλοκαγαθια of the univerſe, and all its parts, has been very highly, and very juſtly, extolled, by the ancient inquirers into nature. And was, indeed, an illuſtrious ſcene, ſpread before the ſages of the Heathen world; wherein to contemplate the goodneſs, and the glories, of the ſupreme Being.——It was nobly ſaid, by a Pagan philoſopher, on this occaſion, Εις τραλα μεταβαλησαι τον Θεον μελλοντα δημιουργειν· *That* GOD, *when he undertook the work of creation, transformed himſelf into love.*——But he need not *transform* himſelf into this amiable principle; for "GOD *is* love:" as was much more loftily ſaid by one, whom that *philoſopher* would have termed a *barbarian*, 1 John iv. 8.

† A very *celebrated poet*, in a beautiful paragraph on this ſubject, informs his readers, that all nature ſwarms with life. In ſubterranean *cells*, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard *ſtone*, in the very inmoſt receſſes of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The *pulp* of mellow *fruit*, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the inviſible nations. Each *liquid*, whether of acid taſte, or milder reliſh, abounds with various forms of ſenſitive exiſtence. Nor is the pure *ſtream*, or tranſparent *air*, without their colonies of unſeen people.——In which conſtitution

verſity, this profuſion of living creatures; flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the ſea? For this noble reaſon,—That the great Sovereign may exerciſe his ſuperabundant goodneſs; that his *table* may be furniſhed, with millions and millions of *gueſts*; that he may fill, every hour, every moment, their mouths with *food*, or their hearts with *gladneſs*.

But, what a ſmall theatre are three or four *elements*, for the operations of JEHOVAH's bounty! His magnificent liberality, ſcorns ſuch ſcanty limits. If you aſk, Wherefore has he created *all worlds*, and repleniſhed them with an unknown *multiplicity* of *beings*; riſing one above another, in an endleſs gradation of ſtill richer endowments, and ſtill nobler capacities? The anſwer is,—For the manifeſtation of his own glory, and eſpecially for the *communication* of his inexhauſtible *beneficence* *.—The great Creator could propoſe no advantage to himſelf. His bliſs is incapable of any addition. "Before the mountains "were brought forth, or ever the earth and the "world were made," he was ſupremely happy, in

tion of things, we have a wonderful inſtance, not only of the divine goodneſs to thoſe minute beings, in *giving* them a *capacity* for animal gratifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in *making* them *imperceptible* to our ſenſes.

——————Theſe, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heav'n, eſcape
The groſſer eye of man: for, if the worlds
In worlds inclos'd ſhould on his ſenſes burſt;
From cates ambroſial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
When ſilence ſleeps o'er all, be ſtunn'd with noiſe.
Thomſon's *Summer*.

* A *ſacred writer*, conſidering this pleaſing ſubject; and confining his obſervation, within the *narrow limits* of his own country; cries out, with a mixture of amazement and gratitude, *How great is his goodneſs, and how great is his beauty!*——Who then can forbear being loſt in wonder, and tranſported with delight; when he extends his ſurvey, to thoſe infinitely more *copious communications* of divine bounty; which, like ſalutary and refreſhing ſtreams, run through all worlds; and make, not only the *little valleys* of a ſingle kingdom, but the *immenſity of creation, laugh and ſing?* Zech. ix. 17.

his

his own independent and all-ſufficient Self. His grand deſign therefore, in erecting ſo many ſtately fabrics; and peopling them with ſo many tribes of inhabitants; was, to *transfuſe* his exuberant *kindneſs*, and *impart felicity* in all its forms. Ten thouſand worlds, ſtocked with ten thouſand times ten thouſand ranks, of ſenſitive and intelligent exiſtence, are ſo many *ſpacious gardens*, which, with *rivers* of communicated *joy*, this ever flowing Fountain waters continually.

BOUNDLESS *, and (which raiſes our idea of this divine principle, to the very higheſt degree of perfection) diſintereſted * munificence! How *inexpreſſibly amiable* is the bleſſed GOD, conſidered in this charming light! Is it poſſible to conceive any excellence, ſo adorable and lovely; as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wiſdom, and exerting almighty power, on purpoſe to make a whole univerſe happy? O my ſoul, what an *irreſiſtible attractive* is here! What a moſt worthy object, for thy moſt fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy, become a rival to this tranſcendently beneficent Being, and rob him of thy heart?—O! no. Let his creating arm teach thee, to *truſt* in the fulneſs of his ſufficiency:——Let his all-ſuperintending eye incline thee, to *ſubmit* to his decrees:——And let his bounty; ſo freely vouchſafed; ſo amply diffuſed; win thee to *love* him, with all the warmeſt affections of a grateful and admiring ſoul: win thee to *ſerve* him, not with a joyleſs awe, or ſlaviſh dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

But, if the goodneſs of GOD is ſo admirably ſeen, in the works of nature, and the favours of Providence; with what a noble ſuperiority, does it *even*

* In this ſenſe, *There is none good but one, that is* GOD. None *univerſally* and *eſſentially* good: none, whoſe goodneſs extends itſelf, in an infinite *variety* of bleſſings, to *every* capable object; or, who always diſpenſes his favours, from the *ſole* principle of *free* and diſintereſted benevolence.

triumph

triumph in the *myſtery* of *redemption*!* Redemption, is the brighteſt mirror, in which to contemplate this moſt lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts, are only as *mites* from the divine treaſury; but redemption opens, I had almoſt ſaid exhauſts, *all* the *ſtores* of his glorious grace. Herein, "GOD *commendeth* his love †:" not only manifeſts, but renders it perfectly marvellous: manifeſts it in ſo ſtupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; and "above all bleſſing and praiſe."——Was HE not thy *Son*, everlaſting GOD, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy boſom from eternal ages; the higheſt *object* of thy complacential *delight?* Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the *tendereſt* affection of *any*, or the *united* affections of *all* mortal parents? Was not the bleſſed JESUS more illuſtrious in excellency, than all angels; more exalted in dignity, than all heavens! And yet didſt thou reſign HIM, for poor mortals; for vile ſinners? Couldſt thou ſee him deſcend, from his *royal throne;* and take up his abode, in the *ſordid ſtable?* See him forego the *homage* of the *ſeraphim;* and ſtand expoſed to the reproachful *indignities* of an inſolent *rabble?* See him arraigned at the bar, and ſentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out

* In this, and in other parts of the *Contemplations*, the reader will obſerve, That the attributes of the DEITY are repreſented, as ſhining, with more diſtinguiſhed luſtre, in the wonders of *redemption*, than in the works of *creation*. If *ſuch remarks* ſhould ſeem to be unprecedented, or to ſtand in need of a vindication; permit me to ſubjoin the ſentiments of a great critic, equally verſed in *both* thoſe ſublime theories.—"*Tully*," ſays he, "requires, in his perfect orator, ſome ſkill in the nature of heavenly bodies; becauſe, his mind will become more extenſive and unconfined; and, when he deſcends to treat of human affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent manner. For the ſame reaſon, that excellent maſter would have recommended the ſtudy of thoſe great and glorious myſteries, which revelation has diſcovered to us; *to which the nobleſt parts of this ſyſtem of the world are as much inferior, as the creature is leſs excellent than the Creator.*" *Spect.* Vol. VIII. No 633.

† Rom. v. 8.

his

his ſoul in agonies of ſorrow?—Could the Father, the Father *himſelf*, with unknown philanthropy, ſay; "It muſt, it ſhall be ſo! My pity to rebellious man "pleads, and prevails. Awake, therefore, O *ſword* *, "edged with divine wrath. Awake; and be "ſheathed in that *immaculate breaſt*: pierce that "*dearly beloved heart*. I am content, that my Son "endure the ſharpneſs of death, rather than *ſinful* "*mortals* periſh for ever."—Incomprehenſible love! May it, henceforward, be the favourite-ſubject of my *meditation*; more delightful to my muſing mind, than applauſe to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my *diſcourſe*; ſweeter to my tongue, than the droppings of the honey-comb to my taſte! May it be my choiceſt *comfort*, through all the changes of *life*: and my reviving *cordial*, even in the laſt extremities of *diſſolution* itſelf!

A *PROPHET*, contemplating, with a diſtant ſurvey, this unexampled inſtance of almighty love, is rapt into a *tranſport* of *delight*. At a loſs for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole univerſe to aid his labouring breaſt, and ſupply his lack of praiſe. *Sing melodiouſly, ye* vaulted *heavens; exult, and even leap for gladneſs, thou* cumbrous *earth: ye mountains*, break your long ſilence, and *burſt into peals of loudeſt acclamation* †; *for the LORD*, by this precious gift, and this great ſalvation, *hath comforted his people*.—A

* Zech. xiii. 7.

† Iſ. xlix. 13.——I have not adhered to our common tranſlation, but endeavoured to preſerve, ſomewhat more faithfully, the noble *pathos*, and inimitable *energy*, of the ſacred original.——The love of GOD manifeſted in a divine and dying Saviour, is a bleſſing of ſuch *inconceivable richneſs*; as muſt render all acknowledgments *flat*, and all encomiums *languid*. Yet, I think, the moſt poetical and moſt *emphatical celebration* of that unſpeakable inſtance of goodneſs, is contained in this rapturous exclamation of the prophet. Which intimates, with a wonderful majeſty of ſentiment, that even the whole compaſs of the *inanimate creation*; could it be *ſenſible* of the benefit, and capable of *delight*; would expreſs its *gratitude*, in all theſe demonſtrations of the moſt lively and exuberant joy.

ſacred hiſtorian hath left it upon record; that, at the firſt exhibition of this raviſhing ſcene, there was with the angel, who brought the bleſſed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly hoſt; praiſing GOD, and making the concave of the ſkies reſound with their hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of righteouſneſs, when he was beginning to riſe with healing in his wings, the *morning-ſtars* ſang together, and all the *ſons of GOD* ſhouted for joy.—And ſhall *man*, whom this gracious diſpenſation principally reſpects; ſhall *man*, who is the centre of all theſe gladdening rays; ſhall he have no *heart* to *adore*, no *anthem* to *celebrate*, This

Love without end, and without meaſure grace?
MILT.

How *clear* is the face of the ſky, and how perfectly *pure!* Clearer than the limpid ſtream, more pure than the poliſhed cryſtal. That *ſtately cieling*; fretted with gold, and ſtretched to an extent of many millions of leagues; is not diſfigured with a *ſingle flaw*. That *azure mantle*; embroidered with ſtars, and ſpacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds; is without the leaſt *ſpot* or *wrinkle*.—— Yet, this can ſcarce yield us, ſo much as a faint repreſentation of the *divine purity*. GOD is a GOD of the moſt immaculate excellence. His ways are uprightneſs itſelf: his councils and words, the very ſanctity of wiſdom, and of truth. The *laws*, which he has given to *univerſal nature*; are exquiſitely contrived, and beyond all poſſibility of improvement. The *precepts*, which he has appointed for the *human race*; are a complete ſummary, of all that is honourable in itſelf, and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the leaſt *overſight*, in planning a ſeries of events for all futurity; nor the leaſt *mal-adminiſtration*, in managing the affairs of every age, ſince time began; of every nation, under the whole heaven.—Pardon theſe diſparaging expreſſions. A *negative perfection* is far, far beneath thy

thy dignity, *O thou moſt Higheſt* *. In all theſe inſtances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but "*glorious in holineſs.*"

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of hoſts, that he ſees *defilement* even in the *brightneſs* of yonder firmament. Thoſe living ſapphires, before his majeſty, loſe their luſtre. *He looketh even to the moon, and it ſhineth not; yea, the ſtars are not pure in his ſight. How much leſs man, who,* in his fallen and depraved ſtate, *is* little better than *a worm*, that crawls in the corrupted carcaſe; *and the ſon of man, who,* by reaſon of his manifold actual impurities, *is* too juſtly compared to *an inſect*, that wallows amidſt ſtench and putrefaction †?——Is there not then abundant cauſe, for

* *O thou moſt Higheſt.*——This expreſſion occurs more than once, in the Pſalms uſed by the eſtabliſhed church. And is, I think, one of thoſe *beauties*; which, becauſe often exhibited, generally eſcape our notice. It is a *ſuperlative* formed on a ſuperlative; and, though not ſtrictly conformable to *grammatical rules*, is nobly ſuperior to them all.——The *language* ſeems to be ſenſible of its own *deficiency*; when the incomprehenſible JEHOVAH is addreſſed, or celebrated. Oppreſſed, as it were, with the glories of the ſubject, it labours after a *more emphatical* manner of diction, than the *ordinary forms* of ſpeech afford.——It is, if I rightly judge, one of thoſe daring and happy peculiarities of a maſterly genius, which Mr *Pope* ſo finely deſcribes; and, while he deſcribes, exemplifies;

> Great wits ſometimes may *glorioufly offend*,
> And *riſe* to *faults* true critics dare not mend;
> From vulgar bounds with brave diſorder part,
> And ſnatch a grace beyond the reach of art.
>
> *Eſſay on Criticiſm.*

St *Paul's*—ελαχιστοτερος παντων των αγιων—is a beautiful paſſage of the like nature; which our tranſlators have very properly rendered, *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints.*——His——πολλω μαλλον κρειτσον——is another inſtance of the ſame kind. But here, the *Engliſh* verſion fails. *Far better*——is extremely *flaccid*, compared with the *nervous* original. And I greatly queſtion, whether it is poſſible to tranſlate the ſentence with equal conciſeneſs, and equal ſpirit. See Eph. iii. 8. Phil. i. 23.

† Job xxv. 5, 6. I ſubmit it to the judgment of the learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text.——It may not be able, perhaps, to recommend itſelf, to the *ſqueamiſhly nice* critic; or to thoſe, who are always extolling the *ſuppoſed dignity* of the human

for the moſt irreproachable and eminent of mankind, to renounce all *arrogant pretenſions;* to lay aſide every aſſuming air; to take nothing but *ſhame* and confuſion to *themſelves?* A holy ſufferer, and holy prophet, felt ſuch humbling impreſſions, from a glimpſe of the uncreated purity. *I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes* *, was the declaration of the one: *I am a man of unclean lips* †, the confeſſion of the other.—And ſhould not this teach us all, to adore the divine mercies, for that precious *purifying fountain* ‡; which was foretold from the foundations of the world, but was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty *whips* tore the fleſh; when ragged *thorns* mangled the temples; when ſharpened *nails* cut freſh ſluices for the crimſon current; when the gaſh of the *ſpear* completed the dreadful work, and *forthwith flowed there,* from the wounded heart, *blood and water.*

Eſpecially ſince the GOD, in whoſe ſight the *very heavens* are *not unſullied;* though ſo curiouſly fine, and "ſpread out like a molten looking-glaſs;"—ſince

nature. But it ſeems, in preference to every other interpretation, *ſuitable* to the ſacred *context*; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the *character* of that apoſtate race, which is "altogether become a-"bominable," and "is as an unclean thing."——On this ſuppoſition, there is not only an *apparent*, but a very *ſtriking* contraſt, between the purity of GOD, and the pollution of man: the *purity* of the moſt high GOD, which outſhines the moon, and eclipſes the ſtars; the *pollution* of degenerate man, which, excluſive of a Saviour, would render him as loathſome to the all-ſeeing Eye, as the vileſt vermin are in ours.———Without aſſigning this ſenſe to the paſſage, I cannot diſcern the force of the *antitheſis*, or indeed the *propriety* of the ſentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of *meanneſs* and *infirmity*; not of *defilement* and *impurity*; unleſs they are inſects of ſuch a particular kind, and conſidered in ſome noiſome circumſtances.——The two words of the original——רִמָּה and תּוֹלַעַת——are evidently uſed in this ſignification by *Moſes* and *Iſaiah*; by the one, to denote the vermin, that devoured the *putrefied manna*; by the other, to expreſs the reptiles, which ſwarm in the *body* that ſees *corruption.* Exod. xvi. 20. Iſ. xiv. 11.

* Job xlii. 6. † Iſ. vi 5.

‡ *In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened, to the houſe of* David, *and to the inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *for ſin and uncleanneſs*, Zech. xiii. 1.

this

this GOD ſaw *no blemiſh* in his *dear Son*. His all-penetrating and jealous eye, diſcerned nothing amiſs, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiſs? Yea, he bore this moſt illuſtrious teſtimony, concerning his holy child JESUS: "In him I am "*pleaſed:* I am *well pleaſed;* I acquieſce, with entire "complacency, and the *higheſt delight*, in his perſon, "his undertaking, and the whole execution of his "office."——How ſhould this thought, *enliven* our *hopes;* while the other, *mortifies* our *pride?* Ought not our hearts, to ſpring within us, and even leap for joy; from the repeated aſſurances given us by revelation, that ſuch a divinely excellent Being, is our Mediator? What apparent reaſon has every believer, to adopt the bleſſed virgin's exclamation? "*My ſoul* "*doth magnify the* LORD for this tranſcendent "mercy; *and my ſpirit rejoices*, not in wide-extended "harveſts, waving over my fertile glebe*; not in "armies vanquiſhed, and leaving the peculiar trea-"ſure of nations for my ſpoil*; but in an infinitely "richer, nobler bleſſing, even *in* GOD *my Saviour.*" —That a perſon ſo ſublime and perfect, has vouchſafed to become my *Surety:* to give himſelf for my *ranſom*, in the world below; and act as my *Advocate* in the Royal Preſence above: yea, to make *my* recovery, the reward of *his* ſufferings; *my* final felicity, the honour of *his* mediatorial kingdom!

WHEN an innumerable multitude † of bodies, many of them more than a *hundred thouſand miles* in diameter ‡, are all ſet *in motion:*—when the *orbits*, in which

* * The inſpired penman, from theſe two *occaſions* of diſtinguiſhed *joy*, ſets forth the incomparably *greater delight* which ariſes from the gift of a Saviour, and the bleſſing of redemption. Iſ. ix. verſ. 3. compared with verſ. 6.

† This refers, not only to the planets which paſs and repaſs about our ſun, but alſo to the other planetary worlds, which are ſuppoſed to attend the ſeveral fixed ſtars.

‡ The diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,653 miles, while his orbit is reckoned to conſiſt of 895,134,000. Which computa-

which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of ſeveral hundreds of *millions*: —when each has a *diſtinct* and ſeparate *ſphere*, for finiſhing his vaſt circuits:—when none knows, what it is to be *cramped*; but moſt *freely expatiates*, in his unbounded career:—when every one is placed, at ſuch an *immenſe remove* from each other; that they appear to their reſpective inhabitants, only as ſo many *ſpots* of *light*:—O! how aſtoniſhing muſt be the *expanſe*, which yields *room* for all thoſe mighty globes, and their widely diffuſed operations! To what prodigious lengths did the Almighty Builder ſtretch his line, when he marked out the ſtupendous platform! I wonder at ſuch an immeaſurable extent. My very thoughts are loſt, in this *abyſs* of ſpace. But, be it known to mortals; be it never forgot by ſinners; that, in all its moſt *ſurpriſing amplitude*, it is *ſmall*, it is *ſcanty*, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its Maker.

HIS *bounty* is abſolutely without limits *, and without end. The moſt laviſh generoſity cannot *exhauſt*, or even *diminiſh* his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men; or rather, all ye claſſes of intelligent creatures; ye are not ſtraitened in the *liberality* of your ever-bleſſed Creator; be not ſtraitened in your own *expectations*. "Open your mouth wide, and he ſhall "fill it" with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your GOD, on whom is your whole

tion, according to the maxims of aſtronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to *other planets* revolving round *other ſuns*.

* By *bounty* I mean, not the actual *exerciſe*, or the *effects*, of this excellency in the Deity. Theſe *are*, and always *muſt be*, through the immenſe perfection of the attribute, and the neceſſary ſcantineſs of the recipient, bounded. But I would be underſtood, as ſpeaking of the divine *power*, and the divine *will*, to exert divine beneficence. Theſe can have no real, no imaginable limits. Theſe, after a communication of bleſſings, diſtributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnumbered ages, muſt *ſtill* have more to beſtow, for *ever* have more to beſtow; *infinitely* more to beſtow, than it is poſſible for creation itſelf to receive.

dependence,

dependence, is more than able; is more than willing; to "ſupply all your need, according to his riches in "glory."——When the LORD JEHOVAH is the giver, and his grace * the gift; let your wiſhes be unbounded, and your cravings inſatiable. *All* that created beings can poſſibly *covet*, is but a very ſmall *pittance* of that unknown happpineſs, which the everlaſting Benefactor is ready to *beſtow*. Form not your eſtimate of the *ſupreme beneficence*, from thoſe narrow models of *mortal kindneſs*; which either your own experience has obſerved, or the hiſtory of ages has recorded. Suppoſe every charitable diſpoſition, which warms the hearts of the human race, added to thoſe more enlarged affections, which glow in heavenly boſoms; what were they all, even in their higheſt exerciſe, compared with the benignity of the divine nature?—Bleſs *me* then, thou eternal Source of love; bleſs *all* that reverence thy holy name; according to thy own moſt profuſe goodneſs: whoſe great prerogative it is, to diſdain all meaſure. O! bleſs us, in proportion to that grace; the richneſs of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once *ſpoke* in the *groans*, and *written* in the *wounds*, of thy expiring Son.

AND as for the *mercy* of GOD, it is "greater than "the heavens;" more extenſive than the dimenſions of the ſky. Charming thought! tranſporting reflection! let me indulge thee once more †. Let me think over

* 2 Cor. ix. 8. *GOD is able to make* all *grace* abound *towards you, that ye, having* all-ſufficiency *in* all things, *may* abound *to* every *good work*. How beautiful and emphatical is this deſcription! inferior to nothing, but that extent of ability, and thoſe riches of liberality, which it ſo eloquently celebrates. Does it not *exhauſt* all the *powers* of language; while it attempts to give us a *ſpecimen*, of the *munificence* of the LORD?

† This refers to p. 93. of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*.——The following pages, to the 126th, exhibit a *digreſſive* view of the divine *mercy*. I thought it proper to appriſe my reader of this excurſion: though, I hope, it will be needleſs to offer an apology for dwelling ſo long upon this delightful theme. Who can complain of

tediouſneſs,

over the noble diſplays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the *trophies* of *forgiving goodneſs*, add one to the number.——With what amiable and affecting colours, is this repreſented in the *parable* of the *prodigal!* What could induce that fooliſh youth, to forſake his gracious father? Had he not been tenderly cheriſhed, by the good parent; and loaded with benefits, from his indulgent hand? were not the *reſtraints* of paternal goverment, an *eaſy yoke?* or rather, a *preſervative* from *ruin?* Notwithſtanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty: and launches out into ſuch ſcandalous irregularities, as were a diſhonour to his family, and deſtructive to himſelf. ——But, when afflictions brought him to a ſenſe of his folly, and ſharp neceſſity drove him to a ſubmiſſive return; did the *injured father* diſcover the leaſt *reſentment* of mind? Quite the reverſe. He *eſpied him*, while he was yet a *great way off*; and, the moment he beheld the profligate creature, "his bowels ſounded "like an harp," touched with notes divinely ſoft. He never once thinks of the riotous living, and infamous courſe of debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, paſſes an act of oblivion; and, in one inſtant, cancels a ſeries of long-continued provocations.—— So ſtrong are the yearnings of fatherly affection; that he even *runs*, to receive the naked and deſtitute wretch, to his arms. And is there a ſingle frown in his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue?—Inſtead of *reproaching* him for his odious exceſſes; he *falls* on his *neck*, and ſnatches him to his eager embraces. Inſtead of rejecting him with indignation, for his undutiful extravagance; he kiſſes him with tears of delight: and rejoices, at his return from folly; as he formerly rejoiced, on the day of his nativity.——When this

tediouſneſs, while I ſpeak *conſolation* to diſtreſſed, and *recovery* to ruined creatures? The divine mercy is the ſole fountain of all our preſent and future bleſſings. In proportion to this benign attribute, human hopes ariſe, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*; when the *lengths* and *breadths* of forgiving grace, are the raviſhing proſpect?

companion.

companion of harlots opens his mouth, *before he ſpeaks, the father hears*. He interrupts him, in the midſt of his intended ſpeech. The overflowings of his compaſſionate heart can brook no delay. He ſeems to be *uneaſy himſelf*, till he has made the afflicted *penitent glad*, with the aſſurance of his acceptance, and the choiceſt of his favours. While the poor abaſhed offender ſeeks nothing more, than not to be abhorred; he is thoroughly reconciled. While he requeſts no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meaneſt ſervant*; he is careſſed, and honoured, as the *deareſt* of *children*.—Was there ever ſo bright and winning a picture, of the tendereſt mercy; moſt freely vouchſafed, to the moſt unworthy of creatures? Yet *thus*, my ſoul; and *thus*, my fellow-ſinner; will the LORD GOD of everlaſting compaſſions receive us; if, with a contrite ſpirit, and lively faith, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

Where ſin has abounded, ſays the proclamation from the court of Heaven, *grace doth much more abound*.—By this *Manaſſeh*, a monſter of barbarity, and an adept in iniquity, becomes a child of forgiving love, and an heir of immortal glory.——Behold that bitter and bloody perſecutor *Saul*, when breathing out threatenings *, and bent upon ſlaughter, he worried the lambs, and

* Acts ix. 1. Σαυλος ετι εμπνεων απειλης και φονυ, *Saul yet breathing out threatening and ſlaughter*.——What a repreſentation is here of a *mind, mad* with *rage*, and abandoned to the fierceſt extremes of barbarity! I ſcarce know, whether I am more *ſhocked* at the perſecutor's *ſavage diſpoſition*, or *charmed* with the evangeliſt's *lively deſcription*.——The adverb——ετι——ſeems to refer to chap. viii. verſ. 3. and has, in this connection, a peculiar force. The havock he had committed, the inoffenſive families he had *already* ruined, were not ſufficient to aſſuage his vengeful ſpirit. They were only a *taſte*; which, inſtead of *glutting* the blood hound, made him more cloſely purſue the track, and more *eagerly pant* for deſtruction.——He is *ſtill* athirſt for violence and murder. So reſtleſs and inſatiable is his thirſt, that he even *breathes out* threatening and ſlaughter. His words are ſpears and arrows, and his tongue a ſharp ſword. It is as natural for him to *menace* the Chriſtians, as to breathe the air.——Nay, they *bleed*, every hour, every moment, in the purpoſes of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every ſyllable he utters, every

and put to death the diſciples of the bleſſed JESUS.

Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced him a veſſel of wrath, deſtined to unavoidable damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude; that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe; they muſt ſurely be reſerved for ſuch an implacable enemy of true godlineſs? Yet (admire and adore the riches of almighty grace!) this *Saul*, is elected into the goodly fellowſhip of the prophets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs; and makes a diſtinguiſhed figure, among the glorious company of the apoſtles.——The *Corinthians* were flagitious, even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in ſuch abominable vices, and habituated themſelves to ſuch outrageous acts of injuſtice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet even theſe ſons of violence, and ſlaves of ſenſuality, "were waſhed; were ſanctified; "were juſtified *." *Waſhed*, in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; *ſanctified*, by the powerful operations of the bleſſed Spirit; *juſtified*, through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious GOD. And thoſe who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of heaven, and the delight of angels.

There is another inſtance in ſcripture, which moſt loudly publiſhes that ſweeteſt of the divine names, "The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, "long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; "keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, "tranſgreſſion, and ſin." An inſtance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very ſtones might cry out, and ſound it in my ears. I mean the caſe of thoſe ſinners, who *murdered* the *Prince* of *peace*, and LORD of glory. Theſe men could ſcarce have the ſhadow of an excuſe for their crime; hardly a circumſtance to extenuate their guilt. They were

very breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cauſe ſome of the innocent diſciples to fall.

* 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. 11.

well

well acquainted with his exemplary converſation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almoſt daily ſpectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all poſſible reaſon to *honour* him, as the moſt *illuſtrious* of beings; and to *receive* him—into their houſes—their arms—their very hearts—as the moſt ineſtimable of bleſſings. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives; they ſeize his perſon; aſperſe his character; drag him before a Heathen tribunal; and extort a ſentence of death, againſt innocence and holineſs itſelf. Never was the *vileſt ſlave*, ſo contumeliouſly abuſed; nor the moſt *execrable malefactor*, ſo barbarouſly executed. The ſun was confounded at the ſhocking ſcene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightnings could with-hold their flaſhes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave aſunder, and open a paſſage for ſuch blood-thirſty miſcreants, into the nethermoſt hell? Shall *theſe* ever hope to obtain *forgiveneſs*, from the righteous Judge? Shall not *theſe* be conſigned over to *inexorable* wrath, and the *ſevereſt* torments?—O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant goodneſs of GOD our Saviour! Many, even of theſe impious wretches, at the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, were convinced of their enormous ſin; were wounded with penitential remorſe; fled to the ſanctuary of the croſs, and laid hold on the horns of that altar; had their pardon ratified by the baptiſmal ſeal; and, continuing in the apoſtle's doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven: where they now ſhine, as ſo many everlaſting *monuments* of moſt diſtinguiſhed *mercy*; and receive beatitude paſt utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once "with wicked "hands they crucified and ſlew."——Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleaſing amazement, "Who "is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, "and paſſeth by tranſgreſſion *?"———Let all fleſh

* Mic. vii. 18.

remember;

remember; let all flesh rejoice; that with the LORD there is *such mercy*, and with his CHRIST *such plentiful redemption*.

WHAT a grand and majestic *dome* is the sky! And where are the *pillars* that support the stately concave? What art, most exactly true, balanced the pressure; and what props of insuperable strength sustain the weight? How is that immeasurable arch *upheld*, unshaken, and unimpaired; while so many generations of busy mortals, have *sunk* and disappeared, as bubbles upon the stream?———If those stars are of such an amazing bulk; how are they all *fastened*, in their lofty situation? By what miracle in mechanics, are so many thousands of ponderous orbs, kept from falling upon our heads; kept from dashing both the world to pieces, and its inhabitants to death? Are they hung in golden, or adamantine, *chains?* Rest they their enormous load on *rocks* of marble, or *columns* of brass? No; they are *pendulous* in fluid æther: and yet are more immoveably *fixed* than if the everlasting mountains lent their ridges for a basis. The almighty Architect *stretches out the north*, and its whole starry train, *over the empty place*. He *hangs the earth*, and all the ethereal globes, *upon nothing* *. Yet are their foundations laid so sure, that they can "never "be moved at any time."

No unfit representation, to the *sincere* Christian, of his *final* perseverance †: but such, as points out the cause

* Job xxvi. 7.

† With regard to the *final perseverance* of the true believer; I am sensible, that this point is not a little controverted.——The sentiments which follow are *my* stedfast belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a discussion of the subject, neither have I room, so much as to hint what might be urged for its support ———Let my reader observe, that I am far from delivering it, as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation. Millions, of the very contrary conviction, are, I doubt not, high in the favour of GOD; and in a growing meetness for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting*, none, I hope, will be offended with me for *espousing*, this particular doctrine.—To be of different opinions, at least in some inferior instances, seems an unavoidable consequence

cauſe, which effects it; and conſtitutes the pledge, which aſcertains it.—His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himſelf, to think a good thought. He has no *viſible ſafeguard*, nor any *ſufficiency* of his *own*. And yet, whole legions of formidable enemies are combined to compaſs his ruin. The *world* lays unnumbered ſnares for his feet: the *devil* is inceſſantly urging the ſiege, by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: the *fleſh*, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendſhip, and a ſpecious pretence of pleaſure, is always forward to betray his integrity.

ſequence of our preſent ſtate: where *ignorance*, in part, cleaves to the *wiſeſt* minds: and *prejudice* eaſily beſets the moſt *impartial* judgments. It may alſo turn to our common advantage; and afford opportunity for exerciſing the *healing* virtues of moderation, meekneſs, and forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to aſk, Whether this tenet does not evidently tend, to eſtabliſh the *comfort* of the Chriſtian; to magnify the *fidelity* of GOD our Saviour; and whether, far from countenancing ſloth, or encouraging remiſſneſs, to *know* that our labour ſhall not be in vain, is not the moſt prevailing inducement to *abound* in the work of the LORD? 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Is any one inclined to examine the reaſons which have made the author a proſelyte to this perſuaſion? He may find them diſplayed in the celebrated paper, delivered by the moſt eminent divines of the church of *England*, at the ever-memorable ſynod of *Dordt*.——(See *Acta Synod. Dodrac.* part 2. page 403. of the *Latin* edition, publiſhed in a ſingle quarto volume).———Thoſe who have no opportunity of conſulting the memoirs of that venerable aſſembly, I would refer to the works of the indefatigable and very learned *Turretin*, or to thoſe of the candid and elegant *Witſius*.——Turret. tom. II. q. xvi. Witſ. Oecon. lib III. cap. xiii.

The lateſt and fulleſt view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with in any of our *Engliſh* writers, is in the *Lime-ſtreet lectures*; which are a defence of ſeveral moſt important doctrines of the goſpel, and contained in two octavo volumes; the united labours of *nine* modern divines; moſt of whom are *well* known to the world, by their *other* evangelical and uſeful writings. In thoſe lectures, the final perſeverance of the ſaints is very particularly ſtated, and, to *my* apprehenſion at leaſt, moſt ſatisfactorily proved; the arguments uſually urged againſt it, impartially conſidered, and I cannot but think (with all due deference to the judgment of others) unanſwerably confuted.

And here (not to ſwell this note any further) I ſhall only juſt hint, that the judicious *Hooker* (an authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced), gives a *ſolemn atteſtation* to this tenet, in a ſhort diſcourſe on the perpetuity of faith, ſubjoined to his *Eccleſiaſtical Polity*. Folio edition.

—But amidſt all theſe threatening circumſtances, of perſonal weakneſs, and imminent danger, an *inviſible aid* is his defence. "*I will uphold thee*," ſays the bleſſed GOD, "*with the right hand of my righteouſneſs* *." O comfortable truth! The arm which fixes the ſtars in their orders, and guides the planets in their courſe, is ſtretched out to preſerve the heirs of ſalvation.—— "*My ſheep*," adds the great Redeemer, "*are mine*; "*and they ſhall never periſh; neither ſhall any pluck* "*them out of my hand* †." What words are theſe! And did they come from HIM, who hath all power in heaven and on earth? And were they ſpoke to every unfeigned, though feeble follower of the great Shepherd? Then, *Omnipotence* itſelf muſt be *vanquiſhed*; before *they* can be *deſtroyed*, either by the ſeductions of fraud, or the aſſaults of violence.

If you aſk therefore, *What ſecurity* we have of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death? —The very *ſame* that eſtabliſhes the heavens, and ſettles the ordinances of the univerſe. Can *theſe* be thrown into confuſion ‡? Then, may the *true believer* draw back unto perdition. Can the ſun be diſlodged from its ſphere, and ruſh lawleſsly through the ſky? Then, and then only, can the faith of GOD's elect ‖ be finally overthrown.——Be of good courage then, my ſoul; rely on thoſe divine ſuccours, which are ſo *ſolemnly ſtipulated*, ſo *faithfully promiſed*. Though thy *grace* be languid as the glimmering *ſpark*; though the *overflowings* of *corruption* threaten it with total extinction; yet, ſince the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cheriſh the dim principle, "many waters cannot "quench it, nor all the floods drown it." Nay, though it were feeble as the *ſmoaking flax* §, almighty goodneſs

* Iſ. xli. 10. † John x. 28.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 35. 36. ‖ Tit i. 2.

§ The *tenderneſs* and *faithfulneſs* of GOD to his people, are finely pictured by the prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. xlii. verſ. 3. Which paſſage, becauſe of its rich conſolation, and uncommon beauty, is deſervedly adopted by St *Matthew*, and ingrafted into the ſyſtem of evangelical truths.——*He will not* himſelf *break*, nor ſuffer to be broken by any

goodneſs ſtands engaged, to augment the heat, to raiſe the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth a *lamp* of immortal *glory*, in the heavens.

AND, as to the *faithfulneſs* of a covenanting GOD; this may be emblematically ſeen, in the ſtability of the heavenly *bodies*, and the *perpetuity* of their *motions* *. —Thoſe that are *fixed*, continue unalterably in their ſtations. No injurious ſhocks; no violence of conflicting elements are able to diſplace thoſe *everlaſting hinges*, on which dependent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not, ſo much as a hair's-breadth, from the preciſe central point of their reſpective ſyſtems.—— While the *erratic* perform their prodigious ſtages, without any intermiſſion, or the leaſt embarraſſment. How ſoon, and how eaſily, is the moſt finiſhed piece of *human machinery* diſconcerted! But all the *celeſtial movements*, are ſo nicely adjuſted; all their operations, ſo critically proportioned; and their mutual dependencies, ſo ſtrongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial courſes throughout all ages. While *mighty cities* are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names loſt in oblivion: while *vaſt empires* are ſwept from their foundations, and leave not ſo much as a ſhadowy trace of their ancient magnificence; while *all terreſtrial* things are ſubject to viciſſitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: *theſe* are permanent in their duration;

any other, *the bruiſed reed; nor quench the ſmoaking flax.* Was it poſſible, to have choſen two more delicate, and expreſſive repreſentations? Could any image be more ſignificant, of a very infirm and enfeebled *faith*; than the flexile *reed*, that bends before every wind: which beſides its natural weakneſs, is made abundantly weaker by being *bruiſed*: and ſo, ready to fall in pieces of itſelf? ——Nor could any thing with a more pathetical exactneſs, deſcribe the extreme imbecillity, of that other principle of the divine life, *love*; than the ſtate of the *flax*, which is but juſt beginning to burn; and conſequently, liable to be put out by the leaſt blaſt: or rather of the *wick* of the lamp, when it is not kindled into ſo much as a glimmering flame, but only *breathing ſmoke*, and uncertain whether it ſhall take fire or no. Matth. xii. 20.

* Pſal. cxix. 86. 90.

invariable in their functions; "not one faileth."—— Who doubts the *conſtant ſucceſſion* of day and night; or the *regular returns* of Summer and Winter? And why, O! why ſhall we doubt the *veracity* of GOD, or diſtruſt the *accompliſhment* of his holy word? Can the ordinances of heaven depart? Then only can GOD forget to be gracious; or neglect the performance of his promiſe.——Nay, our Lord gives us *yet firmer ground* of affiance. He affords us a ſurer bottom for our faith, than the *fundamental laws* of the univerſe. "Heaven and earth," he ſays, "may paſs away; but "not one *jot* or *tittle* of his word ſhall fall ſhort of "its purpoſe." His ſacred word, whatever may obſtruct it, whoever may oppoſe it, ſhall be fulfilled to the very uttermoſt.

O *powerful word!* How aſtoniſhing is its efficacy! When this word was iſſued forth, a *thouſand worlds* emerged out of nothing. And, ſhould the mighty orders be repeated, a *thouſand more* would ſpring into exiſtence. By this word the vaſt ſyſtem of created things is *upheld* in immutable *conſtancy*; but ſhould it give command, or ceaſe to exert its energy, the univerſal frame would be diſſolved, and all nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is *pledged* for the ſafety, the comfort, the happineſs of *the godly*. This inviolable, this almighty word, *ſpeaks* in all the *promiſes* of the goſpel.——How ſtrangely infatuated are our ſouls, that we ſhould value it ſo little! What infidels are we in fact, that we ſhould depend upon it no more! Did it *create* whatever has a being; and ſhall it not *work* faith in our breaſts? Do unnumbered worlds owe their ſupport to this word; and ſhall it not be ſufficient to *buoy* up our ſouls in troubles, or eſtabliſh them in trials? Is it the *life* of the univerſe, and ſhall it be a *dead* letter to mankind?

If I wiſh to be heard, when I implore heavenly bleſſings; is not *this privilege* moſt clearly *made over* to my enjoyment, in that well known text, "Aſk, "and it ſhall be given you *?—If I long for the eter-

* Matth. vii. 7.

nal

nal Comforter to dwell in my heart, and ſanctify my nature; have I not an *apparent title* to this *high prerogative*, conferred in that ſweet aſſertive interrogation, "How much more ſhall your heavenly Father "give the holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk him * ?"—If I earneſtly covet the ineſtimable treaſures, that are compriſed in the great IMMANUEL's mediation; can I have a *firmer claim* to the *noble portion*, that is granted in that moſt precious ſcripture, "Him that cometh "to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out † ?"——What aſſurance, of being intereſted in theſe unſpeakable mercies, would I deſire? What *form* of *conveyance*; what *deed* of *ſettlement*; were it left to my own option, ſhould I chooſe? Here is the word of a King; the King immortal and inviſible; all whoſe declarations ‡ are truth itſelf.———If a monarch *beſtow immunities* on a body of men, and *confirm* them by an authentic *charter*; no one controverts, no one queſtions, their right to the royal favours. And why ſhould we ſuſpect the *validity* of thoſe glorious *grants*, which are made by the everlaſting Sovereign of nature; which he has alſo *ratified* by an oath, and *ſealed* with the blood of his Son?——Corporations may be diſfranchiſed, and charters revoked. Even mountains may be removed, and ſtars drop from their ſpheres. But a tenure *founded* on the divine promiſe, is unalienably *ſecure*; is *laſting* as eternity itſelf.

WE have endeavoured to ſpell out a *ſyllable* of the eternal Name, in the wonders of the ſky. We have catched a *glimpſe* of the Almighty's *glory*, from the luſtre of innumerable ſtars. But would we behold all his excellencies pourtrayed in *full perfection*, and drawn to the *very life*, let us attentively conſider the REDEEMER.——I obſerve, there are ſome parts of

* Luke xi. 13. † John vi. 37.

‡ ———If *theſe* fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenneſs,
And earth's baſe built on ſtubble.——— Milt. *Comus*.

the firmament, in which the *ſtars* ſeem, as it were, to *cluſter*. They are ſown thicker, and they lie cloſer than uſual, and ſtrike the eye with redoubled ſplendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams, and reflect a reciprocal increaſe of brilliancy on each other.—And is there not ſuch an aſſemblage, ſuch a *conſtellation* of the *divine honours*, moſt amiably effulgent in the bleſſed JESUS?

Does not infinite *wiſdom* * ſhine, with ſurpaſſing brightneſs, in CHRIST? To the making of a world, there was no obſtacle; but to the ſaving of man, there ſeemed to be unſurmountable bars. If the rebel is ſuffered to eſcape; where is the *inflexible juſtice*, which denounces "death as the wages of ſin?" If the offender is thoroughly pardoned; where is the *inviolable veracity*, which has ſolemnly declared, "The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die?" Theſe awful attributes are ſet in terrible array; and, like an impenetrable battalion, oppoſe the ſalvation of apoſtate mankind. Who can ſuggeſt a method, to *abſolve* the traiterous race, and yet *vindicate* the honours of almighty ſovereignty? This is an intricacy, which the moſt exalted of finite intelligences are unable to clear. —But, behold the *unſearchable ſecret* revealed! revealed in the wonderful redemption, accompliſhed by a dying Saviour! So *plainly revealed*, that "he who "runs, may read;" and even *babes* underſtand, what minds of the deepeſt penetration could not contrive. ——The Son of GOD, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death in our ſtead. By this means, the threatened *curſe* is executed, in all its *rigour*; and free *grace* is exerciſed, in all its *riches*. Juſtice *maintains* its *rights*, and, with a ſteady hand, adminiſters impartial vengeance; while mercy *diſpenſes* her *pardons*, and welcomes the repentant criminal into its tendereſt embraces. Hereby the ſeemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled; and the ſinner is ſaved, not only in *full conſiſtence*, with the honour

* See the next note.

of

of the ſupreme perfections; but to the moſt *illuſtrious manifeſtation* of them all.

Where does the divine *power* * ſo ſignally exert itſelf, as in the *croſs* of CHRIST, and in the *conqueſts* of grace? —Our LORD, in his loweſt ſtate of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory; than when, through the dividing ſea, and the waſte-howling wilderneſs, he "rode "upon his chariots and horſes of ſalvation." When his hands were *riveted*, with irons, to the bloody tree; he *diſarmed* death of its ſting, and *plucked* the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *weakneſs*, he vanquiſhed the *ſtrong man*, and ſubdued our moſt formidable enemies: even then, he ſpoiled principalities; triumphed over the powers of darkneſs; and led captivity captive.—And now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, "conquering, "and to conquer!"—By this, the *ſlaves* of *ſin* are reſcued from their bondage, and reſtored to the *liberty* of *righteouſneſs*. By this, depraved wretches, whoſe appetites were *ſenſual*, and their diſpoſitions *deviliſh*; are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of GOD, and made partakers of a *divine nature*. Millions, millions of loſt creatures, are ſnatched, by the interpoſition of grace, like *brands* from the burning; and tranſlated into everlaſting manſions, ſhine brighter than the *ſtars*, ſhine bright as the *ſun*, in the kingdom of their Father.

Would you ſee a more complete diſplay of the divine *purity*, than the unſpotted firmament; the ſpangles of heaven; or the golden fountain of day? Contemplate the ſame ſacred Being. 'He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. In his immaculate nature; in his heavenly tem-

* CHRIST, *the wiſdom of GOD, and the power of GOD*, 1 Cor. i. 24.——*To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church* (by the amazing contrivance, circumſtances, and accompliſhment of its redemption) *the* deep, extenſive, and (πολυποικιλος) *greatly diverſified wiſdom of GOD*, Eph. iii. 10.

pers;

pers; in his moſt holy life; the *moral perfections* of the Deity are repreſented, to the higheſt advantage *. ——Hark! how *mercy*, with her charming voice, ſpeaks in all he *utters*.—See! how *benevolence* pours her choiceſt ſtores, in all he *does*. ——Did ever *compaſſion* look ſo amiably ſoft, as in thoſe pitying *tears*; which ſwelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, to bedew the *rancour* of his inveterate enemies? Was it poſſible for *patience* to aſſume a form ſo lovely; as that ſweetly-winning conduct, which bore the *contradiction* of *ſinners*: which intreated the obſtinate, to be reconciled; beſought the guilty, not to die?—In a word; from other things, we may collect ſome *ſcattered rays* of JEHOVAH's glory; but in CHRIST they are all *united*; and beam forth, with the ſtrongeſt radiance, the moſt delightful effulgence *Out of Sion*, and in *Sion*'s great Redeemer, *hath GOD appeared in perfect beauty*.

Search then, my ſoul, above all other purſuits, ſearch the *records* of *redeeming love*. Let theſe be the principal objects of thy ſtudy. Here, employ thyſelf, with the moſt unwearied aſſiduity.—— *In theſe are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge* †. *Such wiſdom*; as the very angels are intenſely deſirous to become more intimately acquainted with ‡: *ſuch*

* In this ſenſe, that ſaying of our LORD is eminently true, *He that hath ſeen ME, hath ſeen the FATHER*, John xiv 9.

† *Coloſ.* ii. 3.—Not a mean degree, but a *treaſure*; not one treaſure, but *many*; not many only, but *all* treaſures, of true wiſdom and ſaving knowledge; are in CHRIST, and his glorious goſpel. ——The *ſuperior excellency* of thoſe treaſures ſeems to be finely intimated, in that other expreſſion—απεκρυψεν—*hid*; or *laid up*; with the utmoſt care, and in a place of the greateſt ſafety. Not left at all adventures to be *ſtumbled upon*, by every giddy *wanderer*; or to *fall into* the arms of the yawning *ſluggard*: but, like *jewels* of the brighteſt luſtre, or *riches* of the higheſt value, *kept in ſtore* to adorn and reward the diligent ſearcher.

‡ This, I believe, is the *import* of the apoſtle's language, though it is not a *literal* tranſlation of—εις α επιθυμουσιν αγγελοι παρακυψαι, 1 Pet i. 12.—I never had ſo lively an apprehenſion of the beautiful ſignificancy of the laſt word, as when I have attended a *diſſection* of ſome part of the *animal* body. In order to diſcern the *minutiæ* of the admirable

ſuch knowledge; as qualifies the poſſeſſor, if not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the moſt honourable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Diſunited from which, all application is but *elaborate impertinence*; and all ſcience, no better than *pompous ignorance*.——Theſe alſo contain the *faultleſs model* of duty, and the *nobleſt motives* to obedience. Nothing ſo powerful, to work a lively faith, and a joyful hope; as an attentive conſideration, of our LORD's unutterable merits. Nothing ſo ſovereign to antidote the peſtilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a ſlavery to ignoble objects; as an habitual remembrance, of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful *ſource* of all *morality*, is the unfeigned love of CHRIST; and the croſs, the CROSS, is the appointed * *altar*, from which we may fetch a *coal* †, to inkindle this ſacred fire.

BEHOLD, therefore the *man*; the matchleſs and ſtupendous man, who gave us a pattern of the moſt exalted virtue, and was himſelf the mirror of every divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his exemplary converſation. Contemplate that *choir* of *graces*, which were aſſociated in his mind, and ſhed the higheſt luſtre on all his actions: familiarize to thy thoughts his heavenly diſcourſes, and enter into the very ſpirit of his *refined doctrines*: get the one tranſ-

admirable frame; the *latent* wonders of art and mechaniſm; the eye is ſo ſharpened, and its application ſo *intenſely bended*, as gives a very juſt *experimental comment* on that expreſſive phraſe, παρακύψαι. ——With ſuch earneſt attention, is the everlaſting goſpel contemplated, by the *angelic* orders! How much more, if it were poſſible, does it deſerve the devout and inceſſant conſideration of *human* minds? Since by *them*, it is not only to be *ſpeculated*, as a bright and raviſhing diſplay of the divine attributes; but to be *applied* to their fallen nature, as a moſt benign ſcheme of *recovering* grace; as the *ſure* and *only* method of obtaining life and immortality.

* *And I*, ſays our LORD, *if I be lifted up from the earth*, and extended on the croſs, *will draw all men unto me*: will give ſuch a rich and tranſcendent diſplay of *my* love, as ſhall conſtitute the moſt powerful and prevailing attractive of *theirs*. John xii. 32.

† Alluding to Iſ. vi. 6.

fuſed

fuſed into thy breaſt, the other tranſcribed in thy life.——Follow him to the *laſt ſcene* of the moſt innocent and uſeful courſe, that was ever paſſed on earth. Follow him to *Calvary*'s horrid eminence; to *Calvary*'s fatal cataſtrophe. Be thy moſt conſtant attention fixed, on that lovely and ſorrowful ſpectacle. Behold the ſpotleſs victim, nailed to the tree, and ſtabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out *prayers*, for his *murderers*; before he poured out his *ſoul*, for *tranſgreſſors*. See the wounds, that ſtream with forgiveneſs, and *bleed balm* for a diſtempered world. O! ſee the juſtice of the Almighty, and his goodneſs; his mercy, and his vengeance; all his *tremendous*, and *gracious* attributes manifeſted: manifeſted with inexpreſſible ſplendor, in that moſt *ignominious*, and yet *grandeſt* of tranſactions.

SINCE GOD is ſo inconceivably great, as theſe his marvellous works declare;

Since the great Sov'reign ſends ten thouſand worlds,
To tell us, he reſides above them all,
In glory's unapproachable receſs * ;

What an *honourable*, as well as advantageous employ, is *prayer!* By prayer we have *acceſs* to that moſt mighty *Potentate;* whoſe ſceptre ſways univerſal nature, and whoſe rich regalia fills the ſkies with luſtre. Prayer places us in the preſence-chamber; while "the "blood of ſprinkling," procures us a gracious audience.

* For this *quotation*, and ſeveral valuable *hints*, I acknowledge myſelf indebted to thoſe beautiful and ſublime poems, intitled *Night-Thoughts*.——Of which I ſhall only ſay, That I receive freſh pleaſure, and richer improvement, from every renewed peruſal. And, I think, I ſhall have reaſon to bleſs the indulgent Beſtower of all wiſdom, for thoſe inſtructive and animating compoſitions, even in my laſt moments. Than which nothing can more emphatically ſpeak their very *ſuperior excellence*, nor give a more *ſolid ſatisfaction* to their worthy author.——Happy ſhould I think myſelf, if theſe *little ſketches* of contemplative devotion, might be honoured with the *moſt inferior* degree of the ſame ſucceſs; and receive a teſtimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of ſome edified Chriſtian.

dience.——Shall I then *bluſh* to be found proſtrate, before the throne of grace? Shall I be *aſhamed* to have it known; that I offer up ſocial ſupplications in the family, or am conſcientious in obſerving my private retirements? Rather, let me *glory* in this unſpeakable privilege. Let me reckon it the *nobleſt* poſture, to fall low on my *knees* before his footſtool; and the higheſt honour, to enjoy communion with his moſt exalted Majeſty.—Incomparably more noble, than to *ſit*, in *perſon*, on the triumphal chariot; or to *ſtand* in *effigy*, amidſt the temple of worthies.

How ineſtimable, in ſuch a view, is that promiſe; which ſo often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy GOD*?*——Will this ſupremely excellent, and almighty Being, vouchſafe to be my portion? To ſettle upon a poor ſinner, not the heritage of a *county*; not the poſſeſſion of the whole *earth*; but his *own* ever-bleſſed *Self?* May I then, through his free condeſcending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all theſe infinitely noble attributes as my treaſure? May I regard the *wiſdom*, which ſuperintends ſuch a multitude of worlds, as my *guide*; the *power*, which produced, and preſerves them in exiſtence, as my *guard*; the *goodneſs*, which, by an endleſs communication of favours, renders them all ſo many habitations of happineſs, as *my exceeding great reward?*—What a fund of felicity, is included in ſuch a bleſſing? How often does the *Iſraelitiſh* prince exult in the aſſurance, that this unutterable and boundleſs good is his own? Intereſted in this, he bids defiance to every evil that can be dreaded; and reſts in certain expectation of every bleſſing that can be deſired. The *LORD is my light, and my ſalvation; whom then ſhall I fear? The LORD*, with an air of exultation, he repeats both his affiance, and his challenge, *is the ſtrength of my life; of whom then ſhall I be afraid†?* Nothing ſo effectual, as this ap-

* Heb. viii. 10. † Pſal. xxvii. 1.

propriating

propriating faith, to inſpire a *dignity* of *mind*, ſuperior to tranſitory trifles; or to create a *calmneſs* of *temper*, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itſelf.——*The LORD is my ſhepherd*, ſays the ſame truly gallant and heroic perſonage: *therefore ſhall I lack nothing* *. How is it poſſible, he ſhould ſuffer want, who has the all ſufficient fulneſs for his ſupply? So long as unerring wiſdom is capable of *contriving* the means, and irreſiſtible power is able to *execute* them, ſuch a one cannot fail, of being ſafe and happy; whether he continue amidſt the viciſſitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

HERE, let us ſtand a moment, and contemplate this great GOD, together with *ourſelves*, in a relative view.——If we reflect on the works of *material* nature, their number incomprehenſible, and their extent unmeaſurable: each of them apart, ſo admirably framed; the connections of the whole, ſo exquiſitely regulated; and all derived, from one and the ſame glorious Agent.——If we recollect the far more noble accompliſhments of elegant taſte, and diſcerning judgment; of refined paſſions, and exalted ſentiments; which are to be found, among the ſeveral orders of *underſtanding* beings; and all of them flowing, in rich emanations, from the one ſole Fountain of intellectual light.——If we farther conſider this Author of material beauty, and moral excellency, as a *guardian*, a *governor*, and *benefactor* to all his creatures: ſupporting their being, and protecting their perſons, by an ever-watchful providence; preſiding over their affairs, and cauſing all events to terminate in the moſt extenſive good; heaping, with unremitted liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the whole circle of exiſtence a ſeminary of happineſs.——Is it poſſible for the human heart, under ſuch captivating views, to be *indifferent* towards

* Pſal. xxiii. 1.

this

this ever-bleſſed Original of all good? Can any be ſo immerſed in ſtupidity, as to ſay unto the Almighty—in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life, to ſay, "Depart from us, we implore "not thy favour; nor deſire the knowledge of thy "ways?"—Wonder, O *heavens!* be amazed, O *earth!* and let all the inhabitants of *both* join their aſtoniſhment, at this unparallelled complication of diſingenuous, ungrateful, and deſtructive perverſeneſs!

If we conſider our *own imperfect* ſtate; frail in our bodies; enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our conſtitution, and in all the occurrences of life, "like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge."—If we ſurvey our *indigent* ſtate; without holineſs; without happineſs; our poſſeſſion of preſent conveniencies, entirely dependent on GOD's ſovereign pleaſure; yea, forfeited, juſtly forfeited, and every future hope, by a thouſand aggravated iniquities.——If we add the various *diſaſters* of our condition; agitated by tumultuous paſſions; oppreſſed with diſpiriting fears; held in ſuſpenſe by a variety of perplexing * cares; liable to pains, and expoſed to troubles; troubles, from every quarter; troubles, of every kind:—can we, amidſt ſo many wants, under ſuch deplorable infirmities, and ſubject to ſuch diſaſtrous accidents,—can we be unconcerned, whether GOD's omnipotent hand,

* All that are converſant with the original language of the New Teſtament, are ſufficiently appriſed, that *this* is the *ſignificancy* of that important diſſuaſive, urged by our LORD, μη μεριμνατε, Matth. vi. 25.——I beg leave, for the ſake of the *unlearned* reader, to obſerve; That our tranſlation, though for the moſt part faithful and excellent, has here ſlipt into a very great impropriety, and miſrepreſented our divine Maſter's meaning. *Take no thought for your body*, is not only not the *true* ſenſe, but the very *reverſe* of the ſcriptural doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* thought, for the neceſſaries of life. The ſluggard, who neglects this decent precaution, is ſeverely reprimanded; is ſent to one of the meaneſt animals, to bluſh for his folly, and learn diſcretion from her conduct, Prov. vi. 6. Our Saviour's precept, and the exact ſenſe of his expreſſion, is, Take no *anxious thought*; indulge no *perplexing* care: *no ſuch* care, as may argue an unreaſonable *diſtruſt* of providence; or may *rend* and *tear* your minds with diſtreſſing, with pernicious ſolicitude.

and uncontroulable will, be *againſt* us, or *for* us? Imagination itſelf ſhudders at the thought!——Can we reſt ſatisfied, without a *well grounded* perſuaſion, that we are *reconciled* to this ſupreme LORD, and the objects of his unchangeable goodneſs!—If there be an abandoned wretch, whoſe apprehenſions are ſo fatally blinded; who is utterly loſt to all ſenſe of his duty, and of his intereſt: let me bewail his *miſery*; while I abhor his impiety. Bewail his miſery; though popularity, with her choiceſt laurels, adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richeſt delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conſpire to call him happy.

May I, by a *believing application*, ſolace myſelf in this everlaſting ſource of love, perfection, and joy! Grant me this requeſt, and I aſk no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a *reluctant anxiety*, but with a *ready chearfulneſs*, the arrival of that important hour; when this vail of fleſh ſhall drop, and all the ſhadows of mortality flee away. When I ſhall no longer complain of *obſcure* knowledge; *languid* affections; and *imperfect* fruition—but, ſhall ſee the uncreated and immortal Majeſty: *ſee* him, not in this diſtant and unaffecting method, of reaſoning from his works; but with the moſt clear and direct intuition of the mind. When I ſhall *love* him, not with a cold and contracted ſpirit; but with the moſt lively and enlarged emotions of gratitude.—When I ſhall abundantly *enjoy* the light of his countenance; and be united, intimately, inſeparably, united to his all-glorious GODHEAD.——Take, ye *ambitious*, unenvied and unoppoſed, take to yourſelves the *toys* of ſtate. May I be enabled to *rejoice* in this bleſſed hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! And I ſhall ſcarce beſtow a thought, on the ſplendid pageantry of the world; unleſs it be to *deſpiſe* its empty pomp, and to *pity* its deluded admirers.

ALL theſe bodies, though immenſe in their ſize, and

and almoſt infinite in their multitude, are *obedient* to the divine *command*. The GOD of wiſdom "telleth "their numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various properties. The GOD of power "calleth "them all by their names," and aſſigns them whatſoever office he pleaſes.——He *marſhalls* all the ſtarry legions, with infinitely greater eaſe, and nicer order; than the moſt expert *general*, arranges his diſciplined *troops*. He appoints their *poſts*; he marks their *rout*; he fixes the time for their *return*. The poſts, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the route, which he ſettles, they perſevere, without the leaſt deviation. And are punctual to the inſtant *, which he fixes for their return.—He has given them a *law*, which, through a long revolution of ages, ſhall not be broken: unleſs his ſovereign will interpoſes, for its *repeal*. Then indeed, their motions are controuled; their action is ſuſpended; and their influence ſealed up.—The *ſun*, at his creation, received a command to travel through the heavens. Since which, he has conſtantly performed the great circuit; and "rejoiced "as a giant, to run his race." But, when it was requiſite to ſubſerve the purpoſes of divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier ſtops his career; *ſtands ſtill in Gibeon* †; and, for the conveniency of the choſen people, holds back the falling day.——The *moon* too was diſpatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving motion, till day and night come to an end. But, when the children of providence, were to be favoured with an uncommon continuance of light, ſhe halts in her march; makes

* "The planets, and all the innumerable hoſt of heavenly bo-"dies, perform their courſes and revolutions, with ſo much cer-"tainty and exactneſs, as never once to fail; but, for almoſt 6000 "years, come conſtantly about to the ſame period, in the hun-"dredth part of a minute." *Stackhouſe*'s Hiſt. Bib.

† This is ſpoken in conformity to the ſcripture-language, and according to the common notion. With reſpect to the power which effected the alteration; it is much the ſame thing, and alike miraculous; whether the ſun, or the earth, be ſuppoſed to move.

a ſolemn pauſe *in the valley of Ajalon* *; and delays to bring on her attendant train of ſhadows.—When the enemies of the LORD are to be diſcomfited, the *ſtars* likewiſe are levied into the ſervice; the ſtars are armed, and take the field; *the ſtars, in their courſes, fought againſt Siſera* †.

So dutiful is material nature; ſo obſequious, in *all her forms*, to her Creator's pleaſure!——The bellowing *thunders*, liſten to his voice; and the vollied *lightnings*, obſerve the direction of his eye. The flying *ſtorm*, and impetuous *whirlwind*, wear his yoke. The raging *waves* revere his nod; they ſhake the earth; and daſh the ſkies; yet, never offer to paſs the bounds, which he has ſet.——Even the *planetary ſpheres*; though vaſtly *larger*, than this wide-extended earth; are, in his hand, as *clay* in the hands of the potter: though, far *ſwifter* than the northern blaſt, they ſweep the long tracks of æther; yet, are

* Joſh. x. 12. 13.——The prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofy manner, celebrates this event; and points out, in very poetical diction, the deſign of ſo ſurpriſing a miracle.——*The ſun and moon ſtood ſtill in their habitation: in the light*, the long-continued and miraculous light, *thy arrows*, edged with deſtruction, *walked* on their awful errand: *in the clear ſhining* of the day, protracted for this very purpoſe, *thy glittering ſpear*, launched by thy people, but guided by thy hand, ſprung to its prey. Hab. iii. 11.

† Judg. v. 20.——The ſcripture-phraſe *fought againſt*, will, I hope, be a proper *warrant* for every expreſſion, I have uſed on this occaſion.——The paſſage is generally ſuppoſed to ſignify, that ſome very dreadful *meteors* (which the ſtars were thought to influence); ſuch as fierce flaſhes of *lightning*; impetuous ſhowers of *rain*; and rapid ſtorms of *hail*; were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of *Iſrael*. If ſo, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphraſe on the text, than thoſe fine lines of a *Jewiſh* writer.——*His ſevere wrath ſhall HE ſharpen for a ſword; and* the world *ſhall* fight *with him* againſt *the ungodly. Then ſhall the* right-aiming thunderbolts *go abroad; and from the* clouds, *as from a* well-drawn bow, *ſhall they fly to the mark. And* hail-ſtones *full of wrath, ſhall be caſt out of a ſtone bow; and the* water *of the ſea ſhall rage againſt them; and the* floods (as was the caſe of the river *Kiſhon*) *ſhall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty* wind *ſhall ſtand up againſt them; and, like a* ſtorm, *ſhall blow them away*, Wiſd. v. 20. 21. 22. 23.

they

they *guided* by his *reins*, and preciſely execute whatever he enjoins.——All theſe enormous *globes* of *central fire*, which beam through the boundleſs azure; in compariſon of which, an army of planets, were like a ſwarm of ſummer-inſects; thoſe, even thoſe, are conformable to his will, as the *melting wax* to the impreſſed ſeal.—And if *all*, ALL *is obedient*, throughout the whole aſcent of things, ſhall *man* be the *only rebel?* Shall our unruly *appetites* reject the government of almighty goodneſs? Shall theſe headſtrong *paſſions* break looſe from divine reſtraint; and run wild, in exorbitant ſallies, after their own imaginations.

O my ſoul, be ſtung with remorſe, and overwhelmed with confuſion, at ſuch a thought! Is it not a righteous thing, that the bleſſed GOD ſhould ſway the ſceptre, with the moſt abſolute authority, over all the creatures, which his power has formed? eſpecially over thoſe creatures; whom his diſtinguiſhing favour, has endued with the noble principle of reaſon, and made capable of a bliſsful immortality? Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate exiſtence, ſubmit to their Maker's decree, by the *neceſſity* of their nature; this more excellent race of beings, ſhould pay their equal homage, by the *willing compliance* of their affections *.

* This argument, I acknowledge, is not *abſolutely concluſive;* but it is *popular* and *ſtriking*. Nor can I think myſelf obliged, in ſuch a work; where *fancy* bears a conſiderable ſway; to proceed always with the caution and exactneſs, of a *diſputer* in the *ſchools*. If there be ſome appearance of analogy, between the fact and the inference, it ſeems ſufficient for my purpoſe; though the deduction ſhould not be neceſſary, or ſtrictly ſyllogiſtical.——One of the *apoſtolic fathers*, has an affecting and truly ſublime paragraph, which runs entirely in this form: Ηλιος τε και σελημη, ασερων τε χορδι, κατα την διαταγην αυτε εν ομονοια, διχα πασης παρεκβασεως, εξελισσουσιν τας επιτεταγμενας αυτοις οριομας· *The ſun, the moon, and the ſtarry choir; without the leaſt deviation, and with the utmoſt harmony, perform the reſolutions appointed them by the ſupreme decree.* From which remark, and abundance of other ſimilar inſtances, obſervable in the œconomy of nature; he exhorts Chriſtians, to a *cordial unanimity* among themſelves, and a *dutiful obedience* to GOD. Vid. *Clem. Roman.* 1. *Ep. ad Corinth, ſect.* 20.——See alſo a beautiful ode in Dr *Watts'* Lyric poems, intitled, *The Compariſon and Complaint*, which turns entirely upon this very thought.

——Come then, all ye *faculties* of my *mind*; come, all ye *powers* of my *body*: give up yourſelves, without a moment's delay, without the leaſt reſerve, to his governance. Stand, like dutiful ſervants, at his foot-ſtool; in an everlaſting readineſs, to *do* whatſoever he requires; to *be* whatſoever he appoints: to further, with *united* efforts, the purpoſes of his glory in this earthly ſcene: or elſe to *ſeparate*, without reluctance, at his ſummons; the *one*, to ſleep in the ſilent duſt; the *other*, to advance his honour, in ſome remoter colony of his kingdom.——Thus, may I join with all the works of the LORD, in all places of his dominion, to recognize his univerſal ſupremacy; and proclaim him *Sovereign* of *ſouls*, as well as *Ruler* of *worlds*.

AT my firſt coming abroad, all theſe *luminaries* were totally *eclipſed*, by the overpowering luſtre of the ſun. They were all placed in the very ſame ſtations; and played the ſame ſprightly beams; yet not one was ſeen. As the day-light wore away, and the ſober ſhades advanced; *Heſperus*, that leads the ſtarry train, diſcloſed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I ſtood gazing, on his bright and beautiful aſpect, others peeped through the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to obſerve theſe freſh emanations of ſplendor; but others dropt the veil; others ſtole into view. When lo! vaſter and more numerous multitudes ſprung from obſcurity; they poured, in ſhining troops, and in ſweet confuſion, over all the empyrean plain: till the firmament ſeemed, like one vaſt conſtellation; and "a flood of glory burſt from all the "ſkies."

Is not ſuch the *riſe*, and ſuch the *progreſs*, of a true *converſion*; in the prejudiced infidel, or inattentive ſinner? In the period of his vainer years, a thouſand *intereſting truths*, lay utterly *undiſcovered*; a thouſand *momentous concerns*, were entirely *diſregarded*. But, when divine grace diſſipates the deluſive glitter, which dazzled his underſtanding, or beguiled his affections; then,

then, he begins to diſcern, dimly to diſcern, the things that belong to his peace. Some powerful admonition of ſcripture, darts conviction into his mind; as the rays of a ſtar, pierce the gloom of night. Then, perhaps, another awful, or chearing text, flings terror, or diffuſes comfort; a *threatening* alarms his fears, or a *promiſe* awakens his hopes. This, poſſibly, is ſucceeded by ſome very *impreſſive* diſpenſation of providence; or improved by ſome edifying, and *inſtructive* converſation. All which is faſtened, as to its continuance; and enlarged, as to its influence; by a diligent ſtudy of the ſacred word. By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence; new ſcenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto, unknown delight, addreſs him with their attractives. New deſires take wing; new purſuits are ſet on foot. A new ſet of tempers actuate his heart; a new habit of converſation regulates his life. Old things are paſſed away; and "he, that was ſometime "darkneſs, is now light, and life, and joy, in the "LORD."

The more attentively I view the cryſtal concave, the greater *number* of luminaries I diſcern. Abundance of minuter lights, that lay concealed from a *ſuperficial notice*, are viſible on a *cloſer examination*. Eſpecially in thoſe tracks of the ſky, which are called the *galaxy*; and are diſtinguiſhable, by a ſort of milky path. There, they are crouded, rather than diſſeminated. The region ſeems to be all on a blaze, with their blended rays. They ſhine thick as *dew-drops*, on the face of the *morning*.——Beſides this vaſt profuſion, which the prying eye diſcovers; were I to make my ſurvey, from any other part of the globe, that lies nearer the Southern Pole; I ſhould behold a *new choir* of ſtarry bodies, which have never appeared in our *hemiſphere*.——And were I, either *here* or *there*, to view the firmament with the *virtuoſo*'s *glaſs*; I ſhould find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, that, immerſed in depths of æther, eſcape the keen-

eſt

eſt unaſiſted ſight *.——And yet, in theſe various ſituations; even with the aid of the teleſcopic tube; I ſhould not be able to deſcry the half, perhaps not a *thouſandth part* of thoſe illuſtrious bodies, which the vaſt expanſive heavens contain †.——So, the more diligently I purſue my ſearch, into thoſe oracles of eternal truth, the *ſcriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increaſing *fund* of *ſpiritual treaſures*. I perceive the diviner ſtrokes of wiſdom, and the richer diſplays of goodneſs; the more tranſcendent excellency of the Meſſiah, and a more deplorable vileneſs in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in GOD's law, and more precious privileges in his goſpel. And yet, after a courſe of ſtudy, ever ſo aſſiduous; ever ſo prolonged; I ſhould have reaſon, to own myſelf, a mere *babe* in heavenly knowledge; or, at moſt, but a *puerile* proficient, in the *ſchool* of CHRIST.

AFTER all my moſt accurate inſpection, thoſe *ſtarry orbs* appear but as *glittering points*; and even the *planets*, though ſo much nearer our earthly manſion, ſeem not to exceed the ſize of *flaming bullets*. If then, we have ſuch *imperfect apprehenſions*, of viſible and material things; how much more ſcanty and inadequate, muſt be our notions of inviſible and immortal objects.——We behold the ſtars; and though

* Come forth, O man, yon azure round ſurvey,
And view thoſe lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glaſſes: clear thy wond'ring eyes:
Millions beyond the former millions riſe:
Look farther:—millions more blaze from remoter ſkies.

See an ingenious poem, intitled, The Univerſe.

† How noble, conſidered in this view, are the celebrations of the divine Majeſty, which frequently occur in the ſacred writings! *It is the LORD that made the heavens*, Pſal. xcvi. 5.——What a prodigious dignity, does ſuch a ſenſe of things give, to that devout aſcription of praiſe! *Thou, even thou, art LORD alone: thou haſt made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hoſt*, Neh. ix. 6.——And how inimitably ſublime is that beautiful climax, in the inſpired hymn! *Praiſe HIM, ſun and moon: praiſe him, all ye ſtars of light: praiſe him, ye heavens of heavens*, Pſal. cxlviii. 3, 4.

every

every one is incomparably *bigger* than this whole earth; yet they *dwindle*, upon our ſurvey, into the moſt diminutive forms. Thus we ſee, by faith, the glories of the bleſſed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the juſtifying merit of his righteouſneſs; and the joys which are reſerved for the godly. But, alas! even our moſt *exalted* ideas, are vaſtly *below* the truth: as much below the truth, as the report which our eyes make of thoſe celeſtial edifices, is inferior to their real grandeur.——Should we take in all the *magnifying* aſſiſtances which art has contrived, thoſe luminous bodies would elude our ſkill, and ſeem as *ſmall* as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth travel towards the cope of heaven, and be carried forwards, in his aerial journey, more than a hundred and ſixty millions of miles *; even in that *advanced* ſituation, thoſe *oceans* of *flame* would look no larger than *radiant ſpecks*.——In like manner, conceive ever ſo magnificently of the Redeemer's *honours*, and of the *bliſs* which he has purchaſed for his people; yet you will fall ſhort. Raiſe your imagination *higher*; ſtretch your invention *wider*; give them *all* the *ſcope*, that a ſoaring and excurſive fancy can take; ſtill your conceptions will be extremely *diſproportionate* to their genuine perfections.———Vaſt are the bodies which roll in the expanſe of heaven; vaſter far are thoſe fields of æther, through which they run their endleſs round: but the excellency of JESUS, and the happineſs laid up for his ſervants, are greater than *either*; than *both*; than *all*. An inſpired writer calls one, "The unſearchable riches of CHRIST;" and ſtiles the other, "An exceeding great and eternal weight "of glory."

* This, incredible as it may ſeem, is not a *mere ſuppoſition*, but a *real fact*. For, about the tenth of *December*, we are above 160,000,000 of miles nearer the Northern parts of the ſky, than we were at the tenth of *June*. And yet, with regard to the ſtars ſituate in that quarter, we perceive no *change* in their *aſpect*, nor any *augmentation* of their *magnitude*.

If thoſe ſtars, are ſo many inexhauſtible *magazines* of *fire*, and immenſe *reſervoirs* of *light*; there is no reaſon to doubt, but they have ſome very *grand uſes*, ſuitable to the magnificence of their nature. To ſpecify, or explain, the particular purpoſes they anſwer; is altogether impoſſible, in our preſent ſtate of diſtance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly diſcern; that they are diſpoſed in ſuch a manner, as is moſt *pleaſing* and *ſerviceable* to mankind.—— They are not placed at ſuch an *infinite remove*, as to lie beyond our ſight; neither are they brought *ſo near* our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We ſee them ſhine on every ſide; and the deep azure, that ſerves them as a ground, heightens their ſplendor. But their influence is gentle, and their rays are deſtitute of heat. So that we are favoured with the view of a multitude of fiery globes; without any riſque, either to the *coolneſs* of our *night*, or the *quiet* of our *repoſe*.—Who can ſufficiently admire that immenſe benignity; which, on our account, *ſtrews* the *earth* with bleſſings of every kind; and vouchſafes to make the *very heavens* ſubſervient to our delight.

But it is not ſolely to adorn the roof of our palace, with coſtly gildings, that God commands the celeſtial luminaries to glitter through the gloom. We alſo reap conſiderable benefits from their miniſtry.—— They *divide* our *time*, and fix its ſolemn periods. They ſettle the *order* of our *works*; and are, according to the deſtination mentioned in ſacred writ, "for "ſigns, and for ſeaſons; for days, and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone, would have been too precarious a rule. But theſe radiant bodies, by the *variation*, and alſo by the *regularity* of their motions, afford a method of calculating, abſolutely certain, and ſufficiently obvious. By this the *farmer* is inſtructed, when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of huſbandry. By this, the *ſailor* knows when to proceed on his voyage with leaſt peril, and how to carry on the buſineſs of navigation with moſt ſucceſs.

Why

Why ſhould not the Chriſtian, the *probationer* for *eternity*, learn, from the ſame monitors, to *number*, for nobler purpoſes, his *days*; and duly to tranſact the grand, grand affairs of his final ſalvation? Since GOD has appointed ſo many bright meaſurers of our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary ſtages: ſure *this* moſt ſtrongly inculcates its *value*, and ſhould powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the ſupreme LORD marks the progreſs of our life, in that moſt *conſpicuous kalendar* above. And does not ſuch an ordination tell us, in the moſt emphatical language, that it is given for *uſe*, not for *waſte*? That no portion of it is delivered, but under a ſtrict account; that all of it is entered, as it paſſes in the divine regiſter; and therefore, that the ſtewards of ſuch a talent, are to expect a future reckoning?——Behold! the very heavens are bidden to be the *accomptants*, of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them, with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as miſers with their *hoarded treaſure*, warily and circumſpectly; and if poſſible, as merchants with their *rich commodities*, not without their equivalent, either in perſonal improvement, or ſocial uſefulneſs!

How *bright* the ſtarry diamonds ſhine! The ambition of eaſtern monarchs could imagine no diſtinction, more noble and ſublime, than that of being likened to thoſe beaming orbs *.——They form night's *richeſt dreſs*; and ſparkle upon her ſable robe, like jewels of the fineſt luſtre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid ſtone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with thoſe glowing decorations of heaven.——How *widely* are their radiant honours *diffuſed!* No nation ſo remote, but ſees their beauty, and rejoices in their uſefulneſs. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every riſing age will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.——How *animating*,

* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.

then,

then, is that *promiſe*, made to the faithful miniſters of the goſpel! "They that turn many to righteouſ-"neſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever *." Is not this a moſt winning encouragement, "to ſpend "and be ſpent," in the ſervice of ſouls? Methinks, the ſtars *beckon* as they *twinkle*. Methinks they ſhew me their ſplendors, on purpoſe to awaken my *alacrity* in the *race* ſet before me; on purpoſe to enliven my *activity* in the *work* that is given me to do.—— If honour has any charms; if true glory, the glory which cometh from GOD, is any attractive; there cannot be a more powerful incitement to exerciſe all aſſiduity in my holy vocation. Therefore, when *zeal* becomes *languid*, let me have recourſe to thoſe lamps of heaven; and *rekindle* its *ardour* at their inextinguiſhable fires.

OF the *polar ſtar*, it is obſervable; that, while other luminaries *alter* their ſituation, this ſeems invariably *fixed* †. While other luminaries, now, mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty; now, retire beneath the horizon, and reſign, to a freſh ſet, the watches of the night; this never departs from its ſtation. This, in every ſeaſon, maintains an *uniform poſition*; and is always to be found, in the ſame track of the northern ſky.—How often has *this* beamed bright intelligence on the *ſailor*; and conducted the keel to its deſired haven! In early ages, thoſe that went down to the ſea in ſhips, and occupied their buſineſs in great waters, had ſcarce any other *ſure guide* for their wandering veſſel. This therefore they viewed with the moſt ſolicitous attention. By this they formed their obſervations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obſcured by clouds, or inveloped in miſts; the trembling mariner was *bewilder-*

* Dan. xii. 3.

† I ſpeak in conformity to the *appearance* of the object. For, though this remarkable ſtar revolves round the pole, its *motion* is ſo *ſlow*, and the *circle* it deſcribes ſo *ſmall*; as render both the revolution, and change of ſituation, hardly perceivable.

ed,

ed, on the watery waſte. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating ſurge; and he knew not *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he ſhould ſteer. But when this auſpicious ſtar broke through the gloom, it diſſipated the *anxiety* of his mind, and cleared up his *dubious paſſage*. He reaſſumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to ſhape his courſe with ſome tolerable degree of ſatisfaction and certainty.

Such, only much *clearer* in its *light*, and much *ſurer* in its *direction*, is the *holy word* of GOD, to thoſe myriads of intellectual beings, who are bound for the eternal ſhores; and, embarked in a veſſel of frail fleſh, are to paſs the waves of this perilous world. In all *difficulties*, thoſe ſacred pages ſhed an *encouraging* ray; in all *uncertainties*, they ſuggeſt the *right determination*, and point out a *proper procedure*. And, what is ſtill a more ineſtimable advantage; they, like the ſtar which conducted the eaſtern ſages, make *plain* our way to the *Redeemer*. They diſplay his unſpeakable merits; diſcover the method of being intereſted in his atonement, and lead the weary ſoul, *toſſed* by troubles, and *ſhattered* by temptations, to that only *harbour* of peaceful repoſe.—Let us therefore attend to this *unerring directory*, with the ſame conſtancy of regard, as the ſea-faring man obſerves his compaſs. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this *ſacred chart*, as the pilot is with every truſty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock; and with every open road, that yields a ſafe paſſage into the port. Above all, let us *commit* ourſelves to this *infallible guidance*, with the ſame implicit reſignation; let us conform to its divine precepts, with the ſame ſedulous care; as the children of *Iſrael*, when ſojourning in the trackleſs deſart, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.—So will it introduce us, not into an *earthly Canaan*, flowing with milk and honey; but into an *immortal paradiſe*, where is the fulneſs of joy, and where are pleaſures for evermore. It will introduce us into thoſe happy, happy regions,

where *our ſun ſhall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itſelf; for the* LORD *ſhall be our everlaſting light, and the days of our mourning*, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, *ſhall be ended* *.

I PERCEIVE a great *variety* in the ſize and ſplendor of thoſe gems of heaven. Some are of the firſt magnitude; others, of an inferior order. Some *glow* with intenſe flames; others *glimmer* with fainter beams. Yet, *all* are *beautiful;* all have their peculiar luſtre, and diſtinct uſe; all tend in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.—This circumſtance is remarked by an author, whoſe ſentiments are a ſource of wiſdom, and the very ſtandard of truth. "One ſtar," ſays the apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, "*differeth* from an-"other ſtar in glory: *ſo* alſo is the reſurrection of "the dead."

In the world above, are various *degrees* of happineſs, various *ſeats* of honour. Some will riſe to more illuſtrious diſtinctions, and richer joys †. Some, like veſſels of ample capacity, will admit more copious acceſſions of light and excellence. And yet, there will be no want, *no deficiency*, in any; but *a fulneſs*, both of divine ſatisfactions, and perſonal perfections. *Each* will enjoy *all* the good; and be adorned with *all* the glory; that his heart can wiſh, or his condition receive.—None will know what it is to envy. Not the leaſt malevolence; nor the leaſt ſelfiſhneſs; but everlaſting friendſhip prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, *cordial love* will give every *particular* ſaint a *participation* of all the fruitions ‡; that are diffuſed through the whole aſſembly of the bleſſed.—None will *eclipſe*, but rather

* Iſ. lx. 20.

† 1 Cor. xv. 41. 42. The great Mr *Mede preſers* the ſenſe here given, and the learned Dr *Hammond admits* it into his paraphraſe. Whoſe joint authority, though far from excluding any *other*, yet is a ſufficient warrant for *this* application of the words.

‡ *Tolle invidiam, & tuum eſt quod habeo: Tolle invidiam, et meum eſt quod habes.* Auguſtine.

reflect

reflect light upon another. A ſweet interchange of rays ſubſiſts; all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleaſure and amity, each will be continually *receiving from*; each inceſſantly *adding to*; the general felicity.

Happy, ſupremely happy they, who obtain the moſt humble portion in the celeſtial manſions. Better to be a *door keeper* in thoſe "ivory palaces *," than to fill the moſt *gorgeous throne* on the earth. The very loweſt place at GOD's right hand, is diſtinguiſhed honour, and conſummate delight.—O! that we may anticipate ſomething of that bliſsful ſtate, while we remain in our baniſhment below! May we, *by rejoicing* in the ſuperior proſperity of another, make it *our own!* And, provided the *general reſult* is harmony, be content, be pleaſed, with *whatſoever part* is aſſigned to our ſhare, in the univerſal choir of affairs.

WHILE I am conſidering the heavenly bodies, I muſt not entirely forget thoſe fundamental laws of our modern aſtronomy, *projection* and *attraction*. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever-operative ſpring of the mighty frame.—In the beginning, the all-creating FIAT impreſſed a proper degree of motion, on each of thoſe whirling orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in ſtrait lines, and to endleſs lengths; till they were even loſt in the abyſs of ſpace. But, the *gravitating* property being added to the *projectile* force, determined their courſes to a *circular* † form; and obliged the

* Pſal. xlv. 8.

† I am aware, the planetary orbits are not ſtrictly *circular*, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a ſmall remove from the perfectly rotund figure; and partake of it incomparably more than the trajectories of the comets; I chooſe to repreſent the thing in this view. Eſpecially, becauſe the notion of a circle is ſo much more intelligible, to the generality of readers, than that of an ellipſis: and becauſe I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any ſuch *abſtruſe* ſentiment, or *barbarous* expreſſion, as ſhould demand a *painful attention*, inſtead of raiſing an *agreeable idea*. For which reaſon, I have

the reluctant rovers, to perform their deſtined rounds.—Were either of thoſe cauſes to ſuſpend their action, all the harmoniouſly moving ſpheres would degenerate into *torpid maſſes*: and, falling into the central fire, be *burnt* to *aſhes*: or elſe would exorbitate into *wild confuſion*; and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be *diſſipated* into *atoms*. But the impulſive and attractive energy, being moſt nicely attempered to each other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty exerting themſelves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the leaſt interruption or deviation. So as to create the alternate changes of *day* and *night*; and diſtribute the uſeful viciſſitudes of *ſucceeding ſeaſons*. So as to anſwer all the great ends of a gracious providence; and procure every comfortable convenience, for univerſal nature.

Does not this conſtitution of the *material*, very naturally lead the thoughts to thoſe grand principles of the *moral* and *devotional* world, *faith* and *love*?—Theſe are often celebrated by the inſpired apoſtle, as a comprehenſive ſummary of the goſpel *. Theſe inſpirit the breaſt, and regulate the progreſs, of each *private Chriſtian*. Theſe unite the *whole congregation* of the faithful to GOD, and one another: to GOD, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and duty; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourſe of brotherly affections, and friendly offices.——If you aſk, Why is it impoſſible for the true believer to live at all adventures? to *ſtagnate* in a liſtleſs *inactivity*; or to indulge the *extravagant excurſions* of lawleſs inclinations?——It is owing to "his faith, working by "love †." He verily truſts, that CHRIST has ſuſtained the infamy, and endured the torment, due to his ſins. He firmly relies on that divine propitiation, for

avoided *technical terms*; have taken no notice of *Jupiter's ſatellites*, or *Saturn's ring*; have not ſo much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the ſcience; leſt, to thoſe that have had no opportunity of uſing the *teleſcope*, or of acquainting themſelves with a *ſyſtem* of *aſtronomy*, I ſhould propound *riddles*, rather than diſplay *entertaining* and *edifying* truths.

* Col. i. 4. Philem. verſ. 5. † Gal. v. 6.

the

the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlaſting ſalvation, as the purchaſe of his Saviour's merits. This produces ſuch a ſet of grateful ſentiments, and ſuch a ſpirit of unfeigned thankfulneſs, as animate his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot *run* to *exceſs* of *riot*; becauſe love to his adorable Redeemer, like a ſtrong, but ſilken *curb*, ſweetly *reſtrains* him. He cannot, he cannot lie *lulled* in a *lethargic indolence*; becauſe love to the ſame infinite Benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *ſpur*, pleaſingly *excites* him. —In a word; faith ſupplies the powerful impulſe, while love gives the determining bias; and leads the willing feet, through the whole circle of GOD's commandments. By the united efficacy of theſe *heavenly graces*, the Chriſtian conduct is preſerved, in the uniformity and beauty of holineſs; as by the blended power of thoſe *Newtonian principles*, the ſolar ſyſtem revolves in a ſteady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extenſive, how diverſified, is the force of this ſingle principle of *attraction* *!—This penetrates the very eſſence of all bodies, and diffuſes itſelf to the remoteſt limits of the mundane ſyſtem.——By this, the vaſt worlds of matter hang *ſelf-balanced* on their centres; and, though orbs of immenſe magnitude, require nothing, but this amazing property, for their ſupport. To this we aſcribe a phænomenon, of a very different kind, the *preſſure* of the atmoſphere: which, though a yielding and expanſive fluid; yet conſtipated by an attractive energy; ſurrounds the whole globe, and incloſes every creature, as it were with a tight bandage. An expedient, this, abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve the texture of our bodies: and indeed, to maintain every ſpecies of animal exiſtence.——Urged by this wonderful *impetus*, the *rivers* circulate with a never-failing current, along the veins of the earth; rolling, with torrent-rapture, down the ſteeps, or ſoftly ebbing through

* I mean the attraction both of *gravitation* and *coheſion*.

the plains. Impelled by the ſame myſterious force, the *nutritious juices* are detached from the ſoil; and, aſcending the trees, find their way through millions of the fineſt meanders, in order to tranſfuſe vegetative life into all the branches.——This confines the *ocean* within proper bounds: though the waves thereof roar; though they toſs themſelves, with all the madneſs of indignant rage; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to paſs even the ſlight barrier of ſand. To this the *mountains* owe that unſhaken firmneſs, which laughs at the ſhock of careering winds; and bids the tempeſt, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave.—By virtue of this inviſible mechaniſm; without the aid of crane or pulley, or any inſtrument of human device; many thouſand *tons* of *water* are *raiſed*, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this, they continue *ſuſpended* in thin air, without any capacious ciſtern, to contain their ſubſtance; or any maſſy pillars, to ſuſtain their weight. By this ſame variouſly acting power, they *drop down* again in gentle falls of dew, or are *precipitated* in copious ſhowers of rain; they *ſlide* into the fields in fleecy flights of ſnow, or are *darted* upon the houſes in clattering ſtorms of hail.—This occaſions the ſtrong *coheſion* of ſolid bodies: without which, our large machines could exert themſelves with no vigour; and the nicer utenſils of life, would elude our expectations of ſervice. This affords a foundation for all thoſe delicate or noble *mechanic arts*; which furniſh mankind with numberleſs conveniencies, both of ornament and delight.—In ſhort; this is the prodigious *ballaſt* which compoſes the equilibrium, and conſtitutes the ſtability of things: this, the great *chain*, which forms the connections of univerſal nature; and the mighty *engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good meaſure, accompliſhes all her operations. —O! what *complicated* effects, from a *ſingle* cauſe *!

* See another remarkable inſtance of this kind, in the *Reflections on a Flower Garden*, page 126.—together with a fine obſervation, quoted in the correſponding note.

What

What profuſion, amidſt frugality; an unknown profuſion of benefits, with the utmoſt frugality of expence!

And what *is* this attraction? Is it a quality, in its exiſtence, inſeparable from *matter*; and, in its acting, independent on the DEITY?——Quite the reverſe. It is the very *finger* of GOD: the conſtant impreſſion of divine power: a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intelligible by mortals.—Does it not, however, bear a conſiderable analogy to the *agency* of the HOLY GHOST, in the Chriſtian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the bleſſed Spirit, thus *extenſive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*?—That almighty Being tranſmits his gifts, through every age; and communicates his graces, to every adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illuſtrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, "all the good that "is done upon earth, he doth it himſelf." Strong in *his* aid, and in the power of *his* might, the ſaints of all times, have trode vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world; and converſed in heaven, while they dwelt on earth. *Not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me**, is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.——By the ſame kindly ſuccours, the whole church is ſtill enlightened, quickened, and governed. By his benign influences, the ſcales of *ignorance*, fall from the underſtanding; the leproſy of *evil concupiſcence*, is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters, of *habitual iniquity*, drop off from the converſation. He breathes even upon dry bones †, and they live: they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly deſire; they exercite themſelves in all the duties of godlineſs.——His real, though ſecret, inſpiration, *diſſolves* the flint in the impenitent breaſt; and *binds* up the ſorrows, of the broken heart: *raiſes* the thoughts *high*, in the elevations of holy hope; yet

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† See that beautiful piece of ſacred and allegorical imagery diſplayed, Ezek. xxxvii.

lays

lays them *low*, in the humiliations of inward abaſement; *ſteels* the ſoul with impenetrable reſolution, and perſevering fortitude; and, at the ſame time, *ſoftens* it into a dove-like meekneſs, and *melts* it in penitential ſorrow.

WHEN I contemplate thoſe *ample* and amazing *ſtructures*, erected in endleſs magnificence, over all the æthereal plains:——When I look upon them as ſo many ſplendid *repoſitories* of *light*, or fruitful *abodes* of *life*:——When I remember, that, in all probability, there are orbs, vaſtly *more remote*, than thoſe which appear to our unaided ſight; orbs, whoſe *effulgence*, though travelling ever ſince the creation, *is not* yet *arrived* upon our coaſts *:—When I ſtretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of beings, which inhabit all thoſe ſpacious ſyſtems; from the *loftieſt ſeraph*, that ſurrounds the throne; to the *puny nations*, which tinge with blue the ſurface of the plum †; or mantle the ſtanding pool with green:—

* If this conjecture (which has no leſs a perſon than the celebrated Mr *Huygens* for its author) concerning *unſeen ſtars*, be true, if, to this obſervation be added, what is affirmed by our ſkilful aſtronomers; that the *motion* of the *rays* of light is ſo *ſurpriſingly ſwift*, as to paſs through ten millions of miles in a ſingle minute——How *vaſt! beyond imagination* vaſt and unmeaſurable, are the *ſpaces* of the *univerſe!*——While the mind is diſtended with the *grand idea*; or, rather, while ſhe is diſpatching her ableſt powers of piercing *judgment*, and excurſive *fancy*; and finds them all *drop ſhort*; all baffled by the amazing ſubject: permit me to apply that beautiful exclamation, and noble remark——

——————Say, proud arch,
Built with divine ambition; in diſdain
Of limit built; built in the taſte of Heav'n;
Vaſt concave! ample dome! waſt thou deſign'd
A *meet apartment* for the DEITY?
Not ſo: that thought alone thy ſtate impairs:
Thy *lofty* ſinks; and ſhallows thy *profound*;
And ſtraitens thy *diffuſive*.———— *Night-Thoughts*, No IX.

† Ev'n the *blue down* the purple plum ſurrounds,
A *living world*, thy failing ſight confounds.
TO HIM a peopled habitation ſhews,
Where millions taſte the bounty GOD beſtows.

See a very beautiful, ſublime, and inſtructive Poem, ſtyled——DEITY.

O!

O! how various are the links, in this immenſe chain! How vaſt the gradations, in this univerſal ſcale of exiſtence! Yet *all* theſe, however vaſt and various, are the *work* of GOD's *hand*, and are *full* of his *preſence*.

He rounded in his palm thoſe dreadfully large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled thoſe aſtoniſhingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are ſuſpended in *fluid* æther, and cannot be *ſhaken*: by him they diſpenſe a *perpetual* tide of beams, and are never *exhauſted*.—He formed, with inexpreſſible nicety, that exquiſitely fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of ſubtile *ſprings*; which organize, and actuate, the frame of the minuteſt inſect. He bids the crimſon current roll; the vital movements play; and aſſociates a *world of wonders*, even in an *animated point* *.———In all theſe, is a rich exhibition of *creating power*; to all theſe, are extended, the ſpecial regards of *preſerving goodneſs*. From hence let me learn to rely on the providence, and to be ever ſenſible of the preſence, of the ſupreme Majeſty.

To *rely* on his *providence*.—For, not *one* being, amidſt that *inconceivable number* and variety, which ſwarm through the regions of creation, is overlooked, or neglected, by the great omnipotent cauſe of all.

* There are living creatures, abundantly ſmaller than the mite. Mr *Bradley*, in his treatiſe on gardening, mentions an *inſect*; which, after accurate examination, he found to be a *thouſand* times *leſs* than the *leaſt* viſible *grain* of ſand. At the ſame time declaring, that ſuch an *animalcule*, though quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is a *bulky being*; compared with others, almoſt infinitely more minute, diſcovered by Mr *Lewenhoec*.———If then we conſider the *ſeveral limbs*, which compoſe (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) ſuch an organized particle: the *different ſprings*, which actuate ſuch a ſet of limbs: the *flow* of *ſpirits*, inexpreſſibly more attenuated, which put thoſe ſprings in motion: the various *fluids* that circulate: the different *ſecretions* that are performed: together with the proportionable minuteneſs of the *ſolids*, before they arrive at their *full growth*: not to mention other *more aſtoniſhing* modes of diminution:—ſure, we ſhall ſee the utmoſt reaſon to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is ——*Maximus in minimis*; *greatly glorious* even in his *ſmalleſt* works.

However

However inconſiderable in its character, or diminutive in its ſize, it is ſtill the production of the univerſal Maker, and belongs to the family of the almighty Father.—What! though enthroned archangels enjoy the *ſmiles* of his *countenance;* yet, the low inhabitants of earth, the moſt deſpicable worms that creep the ground, are not excluded from his kind *providential cares*. Though the manifeſtation of his perfections, is vouchſafed to holy and intellectual eſſences; his ear is open, to the cries of the young raven; his eye attentive, to the wants, and to the welfare, of the very meaneſt births of nature.———How much leſs then, are his *own people* diſregarded? *Thoſe*, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. *They* diſregarded! No: THEY are "kept as the apple of an "eye;" the very hairs of their head are all numbered; and the fondeſt mother may *forget* the *infant*, that is "dandled upon her knees, and ſucks at her breaſt*; much ſooner than the Father of everlaſting compaſſions

* Iſ. xlix. 15. *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate and very expreſſive are the images, in this charming ſcripture! How full of *beauty*, if beheld in a *critical*, how rich with *conſolation*, if conſidered in a *believing* view!——Can a *woman*; one of the ſofter ſex, whoſe nature is moſt impreſſible, and whoſe paſſions are remarkably tender——Can ſuch a one, not barely diſregard, but entirely *forget*; not ſuſpend her care for a while, but utterly eraſe the very memory of—*her child*; her own child, not another's; a child that was formed in her *womb*, and is a part of herſelf?—her *ſon*; the more important, and therefore more deſirable ſpecies; to whom it peculiarly belongs, to preſerve the name, and build up the family—her *only* ſon; for the word is ſingular, and refers to a caſe, where, the offſpring not being numerous, but centered in a ſingle birth, muſt be productive of the fondeſt endearment——Can ſhe diveſt herſelf of all concern for ſuch a child; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her houſe; but, while he continues in an infantile ſtate, and muſt owe his whole ſafety to her kind attendance: while he lies in her boſom, reſts on her arm, and even *ſucks* at her breaſt;—eſpecially, if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or ſeized by ſome ſevere affliction; and ſo become an object of *compaſſion*, as well as of love. Can ſhe hear its piercing cries; can ſhe ſee it all reſtleſs, all helpleſs

compaſſions can *diſcontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful tenderneſs to thoſe, whom he condeſcends to call, not ſervants only, but *children*.

Let this teach me alſo a more lively *ſenſe* of the *divine preſence*.—All the *rolling worlds* above; all the *living atoms* below; together with all the beings that *intervene*, betwixt theſe wide extremes; are *vouchers* for an ever-preſent Deity. "GOD has not left him-"ſelf himſelf without witneſs." There are the marks of his footſteps in every place, and the touches of his finger in every creature. "*Thy name is ſo nigh*, O "thou all-ſupporting, all-informing LORD; *and that* "*do thy wondrous works declare*. Thy goodneſs *warms* "in the morning-ſun, and *refreſhes* in the evening-"breeze. Thy glory *ſhines* in the lamps of midnight, "and *ſmiles* in the bloſſoms of ſpring. We ſee a *trace* "of thy incomprehenſible grandeur, in the *boundleſs* "extent of things; and a *ſketch* of thy exquiſite ſkill, "in thoſe almoſt *evaneſcent* ſparks of life, the inſect-"race."—O! how ſtupid is this heart of mine, that, amidſt ſuch a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every ſide, I ſhould forget thee a ſingle moment! Grant me, thou great I AM; thou Source, and Support, of univerſal exiſtence;——O! grant me an enlightened eye, to *diſcern* thee in every object; and a devout heart, to *adore* thee on every occaſion. Inſtead of living without GOD in the world; may I be ever with him, and ſee all things full of him*!

If

leſs under its miſery; and feel no emotions of paternal pity?—— Or, if *one* ſuch monſter of inhumanity might be found; yet can *all* mothers be ſo degenerate? This ſure, need never be feared. Much leſs need the *true believer*, be apprehenſive of the *failure* of *my kindneſs*. An *univerſal* extinction, of theſe *ſtrongeſt* affections of nature, is a more ſuppoſeable caſe; than that I ſhould ever be unmindful of my people, or regardleſs of their intereſts.

* ————The glitt'ring ſtars,
By the deep ear of meditation heard,
Still in their midnight watches ſing of HIM.
He nodes a calm. The tempeſt blows his wrath,
The thunder is his voice; and the red flaſh
His ſpeedy ſword of juſtice. At his touch

The

If the beautiful ſpangles, which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye; if thoſe other fires, which beam in remoter ſkies; and are diſcoverable only by that revelation to the ſight, the teleſcope: if all thoſe *bright millions*, are ſo many fountains of day; enriched with native and independent luſtre; illuminating planets, and enlivening ſyſtems, of their own *: O! what amazing pomp is diſcloſed, in the midnight-ſcene! What *unknown riches* are diſſeminated through all theſe numberleſs provinces of the great JEHOVAH's empire! Yet, immenſe and endleſs as they are, there is not the *meaneſt ſlave*, but carries incomparably *greater wealth* in his own boſom. The *ſoul*, that informs his clay;—the ſoul, that teaches him to think, and enables him to chuſe; that qualifies him to reliſh rational pleaſure, and to breathe ſublime deſire †;—the ſoul, that is poſſeſſed of ſuch noble faculties; and, above all, is endued with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* capacity, of being pained, or bleſſed for ever—this ſoul ſurpaſſes in worth, whatever the eye can ſee; whatever, of material, the fancy can imagine. Before one ſuch intellectual being, all the moſt aſtoniſhing *magnificence* of unintelligent creation, becomes poor and *contemptible* ‡. For this, Omnipotence

The mountains flame. He ſhakes the ſolid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in theſe alone,
In *ev'ry common inſtance* GOD is ſeen. *Thomſon's Spring.*

* Conſult with *reaſon*. Reaſon will reply,
Each *lucid point*, which glows in yonder ſky,
Informs a *ſyſtem* in the boundleſs ſpace,
And fills, with glory, its appointed place:
With beams unborrow'd, brightens other ſkies;
And *worlds*, to thee unknown, with heat and life ſupplies.
The Univerſe.

† In *this* reſpect, as veſted with ſuch capacities, the ſoul even of *fallen* man, has an unqueſtionable greatneſs and dignity; is *majeſtic, though in ruin.*

‡ I beg leave to tranſcribe a pertinent paſſage, from that celebrated maſter of reaſon, and univerſal literature, Dr *Bentley*; whom no one can be tempted to ſuſpect, either to be ſtured with enthuſiaſm, or warped to bigotry.—" If we conſider," ſays he, " the dignity of an " intelligent

Omnipotence itſelf has waked, and worked, through every age. To *convince* this ſoul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controuled; and the moſt amazing miracles, have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To *inſtruct* this ſoul, the wiſdom of Heaven has been transfuſed into the ſacred page; and miſſionaries have been ſent from the great King, who reſides in light unapproachable. To *ſanctify* this ſoul, the almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and, with a ſweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart. And O! to *redeem* this ſoul from guilt; to reſcue it from hell; the heaven of heavens was bowed, and GOD himſelf came down to dwell in duſt.

Let me pauſe, a moment, upon this important ſubject.——What are the ſchemes, which engage the attention of eminent ſtateſmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the *grand intereſts* of an immortal ſoul? The *ſupport* of *commerce*, and the *ſucceſs* of *armies*, though extremely weighty affairs; yet, if laid in the balance againſt the ſalvation of a ſoul, are lighter than the downy feather, poiſed againſt talents of gold. To ſave a *navy* from *ſhipwreck*, or a *kingdom* from *ſlavery*, are deliverances of the moſt momentous nature, that the tranſactions of mortality can admit. But O! how they ſhrink into an inconſiderable trifle, if (their aſpect upon immortality forgot) they are ſet in competition with the *delivery* of a *ſingle* ſoul, from the anguiſh and horrors of a *diſtreſſed eternity*!*

Since, ſuch is the ſoul's importance; what *vigi-*

" intelligent being, and put that in the ſcale againſt brute and in-
" animate matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human na-
" ture, that the ſoul of one virtuous and religious man, is of
" greater worth and excellency, than the ſun, and his planets, and
" all the ſtars in the world."

See his ſermons at *Boyle's* Lect. No 8.

* Not all yon luminaries quench'd at once
Were half ſo ſad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happineſs, and meets deſpair.

Night-Thoughts, No IX.

lance can be *too much*; or rather what holy *ſolicitude* can be *ſufficient*; for the overſeers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of this unutterably noble charge?—Since ſuch is the importance of the ſoul; wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preſervation of thy own? Shall every *caſual* incident awaken thy concern; every *tranſitory* toy, command thy regard? And ſhall the welfare of thy ſoul, a work of *continual* occurrence; a work of *endleſs* conſequence; ſue, in vain, for thy ſerious care?—Thy ſoul, thy ſoul, is thy all. If this be *ſecured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unſpeakably happy. If this be *loſt*, a whole world acquired, will leave thee in poverty; and all its delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to miſery.

I HAVE often been *charmed*, and *awed*, at the ſight of the nocturnal heavens; even before I knew how to conſider them, in their proper circumſtances of majeſty and beauty. *Something*, like *magic*, has ſtruck my mind, on a tranſient and unthinking ſurvey of the æthereal vault; when tinged throughout with the pureſt azure, and decorated with innumerable ſtarry lamps. I have felt, I know not what powerful and aggrandizing impulſe; that ſnatched me from the *low intanglements* of vanity, and prompted an ardent ſigh for *ſublimer objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the ſilent ſpheres, a commanding call, to ſpurn the abject earth, and pant after unſeen delights.——Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiouſly, this *moral emanation* of the ſkies; when, in ſome ſuch manner as the preceding, they are rationally ſeen, and duly weighed. The ſtars, I truſt, will *teach*, as well as *ſhine*; and help to diſpel, both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkneſs. To ſome, they diſcharge no higher a ſervice, than that of holding a *flambeau* to their *feet*, and ſoftening the horrors of their night. To me, may they be miniſters of a ſuperior order; and act as *counſellors* of *wiſdom*, and *guides* to *happineſs*. Nor will they fail to execute this noble office, if they gently

gently and gradually light my way, into the knowledge of their adored Maker; and point out, with their ſilver-rays, my path to his beatific preſence.

I GAZE, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable things. I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my raviſhed views; and can never ſatiate my ſight, in this immenſe theatre. I ſpring my thoughts in ſpeculation, till even fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders, *ever new*: wonders, more and *more amazing*.——Yet, after all my preſent inquiries, what a mere *nothing* do I *know*; by all my future ſearches, how *little* ſhall I be able to *learn*: of thoſe vaſtly diſtant ſuns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with Newton's piercing ſagacity, or launch into his moſt extenſive ſurveys: yet, even then, my apprehenſions would be little better, than thoſe dim and ſcanty images, which the *mole*, juſt emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic.——This, ſure, ſhould repreſs all immoderate thirſt, after an *inſight* into the *ſecrets* of the ſtarry ſtructures; and make me more careful to *cultivate* my *heart*. To fathom the depths of the Divine Eſſence; or to ſcan univerſal nature, with a critical exactneſs; is an attempt, that ſets the *acuteſt philoſopher*, very nearly on a level with *the ideot*. Since it is almoſt, if not altogether, as impracticable by the one, as by the other.

Be it then my chief ſtudy, not to purſue, what is abſolutely unattainable; but rather to ſeek, what is obvious to find, eaſy to be acquired, and of ineſtimable advantage, when poſſeſſed. O! let me ſeek *that charity*, which edifieth *; *that faith*, which purifieth. Love,

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text; in that admirable chapter, 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other paſſages of ſcripture; the word *charity*, is by no means to be confined, to the particular act of *alms-giving*, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extenſive nature. It ſignifies that noble and divine grace, which *warms* the ſoul with a *ſupreme love* to GOD; and *enlarges* it with a *diſintereſted affection* for men. Which renders it

Love, humble love, and not *conceited ſcience*, keeps the door of heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in JESUS; and not the *haughty ſelf-ſufficient ſpirit*, which ſcorns to be ignorant of any thing; preſents a key * to thoſe abodes of bliſs.——This preſent ſtate, is the ſcene deſtined to the *exerciſe* of *devotion*; the inviſible world, is the place appointed for the *enjoyment* of *knowledge* †. There, the dawn of our infantile minds, will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight-ſhades, will be brightened into all the luſtre of noon. There, the ſouls that come from the *ſchool* of faith, and bring with them the *principles* of love, will dwell in light itſelf; will be obſcured with no darkneſs at all; will know, even as they are known.——Such an acquaintance, therefore, do I deſire to form, and to carry on ſuch a correſpondence, with the heavenly bodies; as may ſhed a benign influence on the ſeeds of grace, implanted in my breaſt. Let the exalted tracks of the firmament, ſink my ſoul into *deep humiliation*. Let thoſe eternal fires, kindle in my heart an *adoring gratitude*, to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which reſt on his ſupporting arm; teach me an *unſhaken affiance*, in their incarnate Maker. And I ſhall be—if not wiſe as the aſtronomical adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked, and worſhipped, in this *univerſal temple*, that is *arched* with ſkies; *emblazed* with ſtars; and *extended* even to immenſity.——Having

the reigning care of the life, and chief delight of the heart, to promote the *glory* of the *ONE*, and the *happineſs* of the *other*.——*This*, *this*, is that charity, of which ſo many *excellent things* are everywhere ſpoken: which can never be too highly extolled, or too earneſtly coveted, ſince it is the *image* of GOD, and the very *ſpirit* of *heaven*.

* By *Milton* beautifully ſtiled,
——The golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity. Milt. *Comus*.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

caſt

caſt an eye, like the enraptured patriarch *; an eye of *reaſon* and *devotion*, through the magnificent ſcene: with the one, having diſcovered an *infinitude* of *worlds*; and with the other, met the *Deity* in every view.——Having beheld, as *Moſes* in the flaming buſh, a *glimpſe* of JEHOVAH's excellencies! *reflected* from the planets, and *ſtreaming* from myriads of celeſtial luminaries———Having read *various leſſons*, in that ſtupendous *book* of *wiſdom* †, where unmeaſurable ſheets of azure compoſe the page: and orbs of radiance write, in everlaſting characters, a *comment* on our *Creed*.———What remains, but that I cloſe the *midnight-ſolemnity*, as our LORD concluded his grand ſacramental inſtitution, with a *ſong* of *praiſe*?—— And behold a hymn, ſuited to the ſublime occaſion; indited by ‡ inſpiration itſelf; transferred into our language, by ‖ one of the higheſt and happieſt efforts of human ingenuity.

The ſpacious firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal ſky,
And ſpangled heav'ns, a ſhining frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
Th' unwearied ſun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power diſplay;
And publiſhes to ev'ry land,
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening-ſhades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly, to the liſt'ning earth,
Repeats the ſtory of her birth:

* Gen. xv. 5.

† ———————For heaven
Is as *the book of* GOD before thee ſet,
Wherein to read his wondrous works.——— *Milton.*

‡ Pſal. xix.

‖ Addiſon, Spect. Vol. VI. No 465.

While all the ſtars, that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And ſpread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in ſolemn ſilence, all
Move round the dark terreſtrial ball?
What though nor real voice nor ſound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reaſon's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever ſinging, as they ſhine,
The hand that made us, is divine.

A

WINTER-PIECE.

Storms and Tempeſts may calm *the Soul—Snow and Ice be taught to* warm *the Heart, and praiſe the Creator.*

Anonym. Lett. to the Author. See p. 196.

THE

The CONTENTS.

INtroduction—Shortneſs of the Winter's Day—Inceſſant Rain, producing a flood—Tempeſt; its Effects; at Land, by Sea—Pitchy Darkneſs; riding in it—Thick Rime—Keen Froſt, and ſerenity of Weather—Severe Cold, and piercing Winds—Deep Snow—General Thaw—Evergreens—Storm of Hail—Rainbow.

A

WINTER-PIECE.

IT is true, in the delightful ſeaſons, HIS tenderneſs, and HIS love, are moſt eminently diſplayed. ——In the *vernal* months, all is beauty to the eye, and muſic to the ear. The clouds drop fatneſs; the air ſoftens into balm; and flowers, in rich abundance, ſpring where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever we look.——Amidſt the burning heats of *Summer*, HE expands the leaves, and thickens the ſhades: he ſpreads the cooling arbour, to receive us; and awakes the gentle breeze, to fan us: the moſs ſwells into a couch, for the repoſe of our bodies; while the rivulet ſoftly rolls, and ſweetly murmurs, to ſoothe our imagination.—In *Autumn*, HIS bounty covers the fields, with a profuſion of yellow treaſure; and bends the boughs, with loads of delicious fruit. He furniſhes his hoſpitable table with preſent plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants.——But is it *only* in theſe ſmiling periods of the year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD, is ſeen? Has *Winter* no tokens of his preſence? Is not Winter eloquent of his praiſe? Yes: "His way is in the whirlwind." Storms and tempeſts fulfil his word, and extol his power. Even piercing froſts bear witneſs to his goodneſs; while they bid the ſhivering nations tremble at his wrath.—Be Winter then, for a while, our theme *. Perhaps, thoſe

* A ſketch of this nature, I muſt acknowledge, is quite different from the ſubject of the book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far

thoſe *barren* ſcenes, may be *fruitful* of intellectual improvement. Perhaps, that chilling cold, which binds the earth in its icy chains; may ſerve to enlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

SEE! how the *day* is *ſhortened!*——The ſun, detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable ſervices, riſes, like an unwilling viſitant, with tardy and reluctant ſteps. He walks, with a ſhy indifference, along the edges of the ſouthern ſky; caſting an oblique glance, he juſt looks upon our dejected world; and ſcarcely ſcatters light through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams, while he continues. Or, if he chance to wear a brighter aſpect, and a cloudleſs brow; yet, like the young and gay in the houſe of mourning, he ſeems uneaſy till he is gone; is in haſte to depart.——And let him depart. Why ſhould we wiſh for his longer ſtay; ſince he can ſhew us nothing but ſpectacles of woe? The flowery world lies dead, and the tuneful tribes are ſtruck dumb. The trees, ſtript of their verdure, and laſhed by ſtorms, ſpread their naked arms to the enraged and relentleſs heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air; but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales blow. Nature, diveſted of all her beautiful robes, ſits, like a forlorn, diſconſolate widow, in her weeds. While winds, in doleful accents, howl; and rains, in repeated ſhowers, weep.

We regret not, therefore, the ſpeedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with *funeral black*, and diſmal objects are all around; who would wiſh to have the *glimmering tapers* kept alive; which can only diſcover ſcenes of ſorrow; only make the horror

far diſtant from the thoughts of the author. But, the deſire of *ſeveral* acquaintance, together with an intimation of its uſefulneſs, by a very *polite letter* from an *unknown hand*, (which has *undeſignedly* furniſhed me with the beſt motto I could recollect), prevailed with me to add a few deſcriptive touches, and improving hints, on what is ſo often experienced in theſe northern regions. I hope, the attempt I have made to oblige theſe gentlemen, will obtain the *approbation*, or at leaſt the *excuſe*, of my other readers.

viſible?

viſible?—And, ſince this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with ſin, or an unremitted ſtruggle with miſery; is it not a *gracious* ordination, which has reduced our age to a *ſpan?* Fourſcore years of trial, for the virtuous, are ſufficiently long; and more than ſuch a term, allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all meaſure vile. Our way to the kingdom of heaven, lies through tribulations: ſhall we then *accuſe*, ſhall we not rather *bleſs*, the providence, which has made the paſſage ſhort? Soon, ſoon we croſs the vale of tears; and then arrive on the happy hills, where light for ever ſhines, where joy for ever ſmiles.

Sometimes, the day is rendered ſhorter ſtill; is almoſt blotted out from the year *. The vapours gather: they thicken into an impenetrable gloom, and obſcure the face of the ſky. At length, the *rains* deſcend; the ſluices of the firmament are opened; and the low-hung clouds pour their congregated ſtores. Copious and unintermitted, ſtill they pour; and ſtill are unexhauſted. The waters drop inceſſantly from the eaves, and ruſh in rapid ſtreams from the ſpouts. They roar along the channelled pavements, and ſtand in foul ſhallows amidſt the village ſtreets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but ſcantily covered; the inſinuating element finds its way into every flaw, and oozing through the cieling, at once upbraids and chaſtiſes the careleſs inhabitant. The ploughman, ſoaked to the ſkin, leaves his half-tilled acre. The poor poultry, dripping with wet, croud into ſhelter. The tenants of the bough fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the ſtreaming air. The beaſts, joyleſs and diſpirited, ruminate under their ſheds. The roads ſwim, and the brooks ſwell.—The *river*, amidſt all this watery ferment, long contained itſelf within its appointed bounds. But, ſwollen by innumerable currents: and rouſed, at laſt, into uncontroulable rage; burſts over its banks;

* Involvere diem nimbi, & *nox humida* cœlum
Abſtulit.——— *Virg.*

ſhoots

ſhoots into the plain; bears down all oppoſition; ſpreads itſelf far and wide; and buries the meadow under a brown, ſluggiſh, ſoaking *deluge*.

How fortunate for man, that this inundation comes, when there are no flowery crops in the valley to be overwhelmed; no fields ſtanding thick with corn, to be laid waſte! At *ſuch* a juncture, it would have been *ruin* to the huſbandman and his family: but, *thus* timed, it yields *manure* for his ground, and promiſes him *riches* in reverſion.——How often, and how long, has the divine Majeſty bore with the moſt injurious affronts from ſinners! His goodneſs triumphed over their perverſeneſs, and graciouſly refuſed to be exaſperated. But Oh! preſumptuous creatures, multiply no longer your provocations. Urge not, by repeated iniquities, the almighty arm to ſtrike; leſt his long-ſuffering ceaſe, and his fierce anger break forth; break forth, like a *flood of waters* *, and ſweep you away, into irrecoverable and everlaſting perdition.

How mighty! how majeſtic! and O, how myſterious are thy works, thou GOD of heaven, and LORD of nature! When the air is calm, where ſleep the *ſtormy winds?* in what chambers are they repoſed, or in what dungeons confined? Till thou art pleaſed to awaken their rage, and throw open their priſon-doors: then, with irreſiſtible impetuoſity they fly forth, ſcattering dread, and menacing deſtruction.

The whole atmoſphere is hurled into the moſt tumultuous confuſion. The aerial torrent burſts its way over mountains, ſeas, and continents. All things feel the dreadful ſhock. All things tremble before the furious blaſt. The *foreſt*, vexed and tore, groans under the ſcourge: her ſturdy ſons are ſtrained to the very root, and almoſt kiſs the ſoil they were wont to ſhade. The ſtubborn oak, that diſdains to bend, is daſhed headlong to the ground; and, with ſhattered arms, with proſtrate trunk, blocks the road.——While the flexile reed, that ſprings up in the marſh,

* Hoſ. v. 10.

yielding

yielding to the guſt, (as the *meek* and pliant temper, to injuries; or the *reſigned* and patient ſpirit to misfortunes); eludes the force of the ſtorm, and ſurvives amidſt the wide-ſpread havock.

For a moment, the turbulent and outrageous ſky, ſeems to be aſſwaged; but, it intermits its wrath, only to increaſe its ſtrength. Soon, the ſounding ſquadrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury. The ſtately dome rocks, amidſt the wheeling clouds. The impregnable tower totters on its baſis, and threatens to overwhelm, whom it was intended to protect. The ragged rock is rent in pieces *; and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations, are ſcarcely ſecure.—Where, now, is the place of ſafety? When the *city* reels, and houſes become heaps! Sleep affrighted flies. Diverſion is turned into horror. All is uproar in the element; all is conſternation among mortals; and nothing but one wide ſcene of rueful devaſtation, through the land.—Yet this is only an *inferior* miniſter of divine diſpleaſure. The executioner of *milder* indignation. How then—O! *how will the loſty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men be bowed down* †: when the Lord God Omnipotent ſhall *meditate* terror——when he ſhall ſet *all* his terrors in array—when he ariſes, to judge the nations, and to *ſhake terribly* the earth!

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

† ——————*Mortalia corda*
Per gentes humilis ſtravit pavor.——————

One would almoſt imagine, that *Virgil* had read *Iſaiah*, and borrowed his ideas from chap ii. verſ. 11. The *humilis*, and *ſtravit*, of the one, ſo exactly correſpond with the—*humbled*—*bowed down*—of the other. But, in one circumſtance, the poet is vaſtly inferior to the prophet. The latter, by giving a very ſtriking *contraſt* to his ſentiments, repreſents them with incomparably greater energy. He ſays not, *men* in the groſs, or the *human heart* in general: but men of the moſt *elated* looks; hearts big with the moſt *arrogant* imaginations; even *haughtineſs* itſelf; ſhall *ſtoop* from their ſupercilious heights, ſhall *grovel* in the loweſt duſt of abaſement, and *ſhudder* with all the extremes of an abject puſillanimity.

The *ocean* ſwells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed, and almoſt lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the moſt rapid agitation, they ſweep over the rocks; they laſh the lofty cliffs; and toſs themſelves into the clouds. Navies are rent from their anchors; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled, ſwift as the arrow, wild as the winds, along the vaſt abyſs. Now, they climb the rolling mountain, they plough the frightful ridge, and ſeem to ſkim the ſkies: anon, they plunge into the opening gulph, they loſe the ſight of day, and are loſt themſelves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art! How impotent the mariner's ſtrength! They reel to and fro, and ſtagger in the jarring hold; or cling to the cordage, while burſting ſeas foam over the deck. *Deſpair* is in every face, and *death* ſits threatening on every ſurge.—But why, O ye aſtoniſhed mariners, why ſhould you abandon yourſelves to deſpair? Is the LORD's hand *ſhortened*, becauſe the waves of the ſea rage horribly? Is his ear *deafened*, by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempeſt? Cry, cry, unto HIM, who "holdeth the winds in his fiſt, and the "waters in the hollow of his hand." HE is all-gracious, to hear; and almighty, to ſave. If HE command, the ſtorm ſhall be huſhed to ſilence; the billows ſhall ſubſide into a calm; the lightnings ſhall lay their fiery bolts aſide: and, inſtead of ſinking in a watery grave, you ſhall find yourſelves brought to the deſired haven.

Sometimes, after a joyleſs day, a more melancholy *night* ſucceeds.——The lazy, louring vapours had wove ſo thick a veil, as the meridian ſun could ſcarcely penetrate. What gloom then muſt overwhelm the nocturnal hours! The moon withdraws her ſhining. Not a ſingle ſtar, is able to ſtruggle through the deep arrangement of ſhades. All is *pitchy darkneſs*, without one enlivening ray. How ſolemn! How awful! It is like the return of chaos, or the ſhroud of nature. I do not wonder that it is the parent of terrors, and

ſo

ſo apt to engender fear. Lately, the *tempeſt* marked its rapid way with *miſchief*; now the *night*, dreſſes her ſilent pavilion with *horror*.

I have *ſometimes* left the beaming tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickeſt of theſe ſooty ſhades: not in the leaſt regretting the change, but rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleaſing, was exhilarating, compared with the converſation I quitted. The ſpeech of my *companions* (how does it grieve me, that I ſhould, *even once*, have occaſion to call them by *that* name!) was the language of darkneſs: was horror to the ſoul, and torture to the ear *.——Alas! that I ſhould have room to make the reflection! May I never be under a *neceſſity* of repeating it! Their tongues were dipt in the venom of aſps: "their "throat was an open ſepulchre;" cruel to their neighbour's character, as the grave; and inſatiable in *ſlanderous* aſſaſſinations, as the grave in devouring her prey.—Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable diſcourſe, ſhot arrows of *profaneneſs* againſt Heaven itſelf; and, in proud defiance, challenged the reſentment of Omnipotence.——Sometimes, as if it was the glory of human nature to ſhare and cheriſh the *groſſeſt* appetites of the brute; and the mark of a gentleman, to have ſerved an apprenticeſhip in a brothel; the filthieſt jeſts of the ſtews, (if low *obſcenity* can be a jeſt), were nauſeouſly obtruded on the company, till all the *modeſt* part of it was expelled: while the other

* What has been ſaid, I aſk'd my ſoul, what done?
How flow'd our mirth? or whence the ſource begun?
Perhaps, the jeſt, that charm'd the ſprightly croud,
And made the jovial table laugh ſo loud,
To ſome *falſe* notion ow'd its poor pretence,
To an ambiguous word's perverted ſenſe;
To a wild ſonnet, or a wanton air,
Offence and torture to the ſober ear.
Perhaps, alas! the pleaſing ſtream was brought
From this man's error, from another's fault;
From topics, which good nature would forget,
And *prudence* mention with the laſt regret. *Prior's Solomon.*

beſotted creatures laughed aloud, though the leproſy of uncleanneſs appeared on their lips.——Are not theſe perſons *priſoners* of *darkneſs*; though blazing ſconces, pour artificial day through their rooms? Are not their ſouls immured in the moſt baleful ſhades; though the noon-tide ſun is brightened, by flaming on their gilded chariots? They diſcern not that great and adorable Being who fills the univerſe with his infinite and glorious preſence: who is all eye, to obſerve their actions; all ear, to hear their words. They know not the all-ſufficient Redeemer, nor the unſpeakable bleſſedneſs of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happineſs; but will certainly graſp the thorn of anxiety. They are wantonly ſporting on the brink of that precipice; from whence, in a moment, they may fall headlong into *irretrieveable* ruin, and *endleſs deſpair*.

They have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my abſence: are charging my reverence for my Maker, and *real* ſenſe of the *excellency* of the RATIONAL nature, to the account of humour and ſingularity; narrowneſs of thought, or ſourneſs of temper.——But be it ſo.——I will indulge no indignation againſt them; and, if any thing like it *ſhould* ariſe, I will convert it into prayer——"Pity them, "Oh thou Father of mercies!—Shew them the mad-"neſs of their profaneneſs—Shew them the baſeneſs "of their vile ribaldry—Let them be dumb, in ſilent "ſhame and confuſion; till they open their lips to "adore thine *inſulted* Majeſty—to implore thy gra-"cious pardon—and humbly devote to thee, thoſe "ſocial hours, thoſe injured faculties; which they "are now abuſing, to thy diſhonour; to their own "mutual contamination; and (unleſs timely repent-"ance intervene) to their common infamy, and "final perdition."

I ride home amidſt the gloomy void; all darkling and ſolitary, I can ſcarce diſcern my horſe's head; and only gueſs out my blind road. *No companion*, but danger;

danger; or, perhaps, "deſtruction ready at my ſide *." —— But, why do I fancy myſelf ſolitary? Is not the Father of lights; the GOD of my life; the great and everlaſting Friend; always at my right hand? Becauſe the day is excluded, is his omnipreſence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near, to aſſiſt in caſe of a misfortune; or to beguile the time, and divert uneaſy ſuſpicions, by entertaining conferences: may I not lay my help upon the Almighty, and converſe with GOD by humble ſupplication? For this exerciſe, no place is improper; no hour unſeaſonable; and no poſture incommodious. This is *ſociety*, the beſt of ſociety, even in ſolitude. This is a fund of delights, eaſily portable and quite inexhauſtible. A *treaſure* this, of unknown value; and liable to no hazard, from wrong or robbery; but perfectly ſecure to the lonely wanderer, in the moſt darkſome paths.

And why ſhould I diſtreſs myſelf with *apprehenſions* of *peril?* This acceſs to GOD, is not only an indefeaſible privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory garriſon*. Thoſe, that make known their requeſts unto GOD, and rely upon his protecting care, he gives *his angels* charge over their welfare. His angels are commiſſioned, to eſcort them in their travelling; and to hold up their goings, that they daſh not their foot againſt a ſtone †. Nay, *he himſelf* condeſcends to be their guardian, and "keeps all their bones, ſo that not one "of them is broken." They are, according to the certificate of revelation, "in league with the ſtones of "the field ‡." Though they fall headlong on the flints; even the flints, fitted to fracture the ſkull, ſhall receive them as into the arms of friendſhip; and not offer to hurt, whom the LORD is pleaſed to preſerve.

May I then enjoy the preſence of this gracious GOD, and darkneſs and light ſhall be both alike. Let HIM whiſper peace to my conſcience: and this dread ſilence ſhall be more charming than the voice of eloquence, or the ſtrains of muſic. Let HIM reveal his raviſhing

* Job xviii. 12. † Pſal. xci. 11. 12. ‡ Job v. 23.

perfections in my ſoul; and I ſhall not want the ſaffron-beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the impurpled evening ſky. I ſhall ſigh only for thoſe moſt deſirable and diſtinguiſhed realms; where the light of HIS countenance *perpetually* ſhines, and conſequently——" there is * no night there."

How ſurpriſing are the alterations of nature! I left her the preceding evening plain and unadorned. But now, a *thick rime* has ſhed its hoary honours over all. It has ſhagged the fleeces of the ſheep, and criſped the traveller's locks. The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground profuſely powdered. The downward branches are taſſelled with ſilver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

But the *fine* are not always the *valuable*. The air, amidſt all theſe gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholeſome* damps. The hazy influence ſpreads wide; ſits deep; hangs heavy and oppreſſive on the ſprings of life. A liſtleſs languor clogs the animal functions; and the purple ſtream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain, the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers: in vain, he attempts to diſperſe this inſurrection of vapours. The ſullen malignant cloud refuſes to depart. It envelopes the world, and *intercepts* the *proſpect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring village; I ſend my eye in queſt of the riſing turret; but am ſcarce able to diſcern the very next houſe. Where are the blue arches of heaven; where the radiant countenance of the ſun; and where the boundleſs ſcenes of creation? Loſt, loſt are the beauties; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the univerſe, ſeems an empty void; and all its elegant pictures, an undiſtinguiſhed blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the *goſpel* had not come in to our relief. We ſhould have known, neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourſelves; the preſent ſtate all confuſion, and the future impenetrable

* Rev. xxi. 25.

darkneſs.

darkneſs. But, the Sun of righteouſneſs, ariſing with potent and triumphant beams, has diſſipated the interpoſing cloud; and opened a proſpect, more beautiful than the bloſſoms of Spring; more chearing than the treaſures of Autumn; more enlarged than the extent of the viſible ſyſtem: which, having led the eye of the mind, through fields of grace, over rivers of righteouſneſs, and hills crowned with knowledge; terminates, at length, in the heavens; ſweetly loſing itſelf in regions of infinite bliſs, and endleſs glory.

As I walk along the fog, it ſeems, at ſome little diſtance, to be almoſt ſolid gloom; ſuch as would ſhut out every glimpſe of light, and totally impriſon me in obſcurity. But, when I approach, and enter it; I find myſelf agreeably miſtaken, and the miſt much *thinner* than it *appeared*.——Such is the caſe, with regard to the *ſufferings* of the preſent life; they are not, when experienced, ſo dreadful, as a timorous imagination ſurmiſed. Such alſo is the caſe, with reference to the *gratifications* of *ſenſe*; they prove not, when enjoyed, ſo ſubſtantial as a ſanguine expectation repreſented. In both inſtances, we are graciouſly diſappointed: the edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguiſh: the exquiſite reliſh of the proſperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enſlave them to inferior delights.

Sometimes, the face of things wears a more pleaſing form; the very reverſe of the foregoing. The ſober evening advances, to cloſe the ſhort-lived day. The firmament, clear and unſullied, puts on its brighteſt blue. The ſtars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanſe. While the *froſt* pours its ſubtile and penetrating influence all around. Sharp, and intenſely keen, all the long night, the rigid æther continues its operations. When, late and ſlow, the morning opens her pale eye; in what a curious and amuſing diſguiſe, is nature dreſſed! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendant on the houſes. A whitiſh film incruſts the windows,

windows, where mimic landſkips riſe, and fancied figures ſwell. The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moiſtened meadows are congealed to marble; and both reſound (an effect unknown before) with the peaſant's haſty tread. The ſtream is arreſted in its career, and its ever-flowing ſurface chained to the banks. The fluid paths become a ſolid road; where the finny ſhoals were wont to rove, the ſportive youth glide, or the rattling chariots roll *. And (what would ſeem to an inhabitant of the ſouthern world, as unaccountable, as the deepeſt myſteries of religion) that very ſame breath of heaven, which *cements* the lakes into a cryſtal pavement; *cleaves* the oaks, as it were, with inviſible wedges, "*breaks* in pieces the "northern iron, and the ſteel;" even while it *builds* a bridge of icy rock, over the ſeas †.

The air is all ſerenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the moſt diſtinct views, and extenſive proſpects. The ſeeds of *infection*, are killed; and the *peſtilence* deſtroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of *affliction* tends to mortify our corruptions, and ſubdue our vicious habits.—The crouding atmoſphere conſtringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The ſpirits are buoyant, and ſally briſkly on the execution of their office. Had we been under ſuch unclouded ſkies, and ſo bright a ſun, in the Summer-months; we ſhould have been melted with heat, and ſoftened into ſupineneſs: been ready to ſtretch our limbs under the ſpreading beach, and lie at eaſe by the murmuring brook. But, now, none loiters in his path; none is ſeen with folded arms: all is in mo-

* Concreſcunt ſubito currenti in flumine cruſtæ;
Undaque jam tergo ferratos ſuſtinet orbes,
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hoſpita plauſtris.
Æraque diſſiliunt vulgo. *Virg.*

† Job xxxviii. 30. *The waters are hid*, locked up from the cattle's lips, ſecured from the fiſher's nets, and concealed from the human eye, *as* wells are *with a* ponderous and impenetrable *ſtone*. *And* not only lakes and rivers, but *the ſurface of the* great and boundleſs *deep*, with its reſtleſs and uncontroulable ſurges, *is taken captive* יִתָּרְנוּ by the froſt, and bound in ſhining fetters.

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tion; all is activity; choice, prompted by the weather, ſupplies the ſpur of neceſſity. Thus, the *rugged ſchool* of *misfortune*, often trains up the mind, to a lively exertion of its faculties; the *keen* climate of *adverſity*, often inſpires us with a manly reſolution: when a ſoft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous ſprings of the ſoul, and have left it enervated with pleaſure, or diſſolved in indolence.

"*Cold* cometh out of the North *." The winds, having ſwept thoſe deſarts of ſnow, arm themſelves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce deſcent upon our iſle. Under black and ſcowling clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing, through the darkened air. They growl around our houſes; aſſault our doors; and, eager for entrance, faſten on our windows. Walls can ſcarce reſtrain them; bars are unable to exclude them; through every cranny they force their way. Ice is on their wings; they ſcatter agues through the land; and Winter, all Winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a ſearing † iron to the little verdure left in the plains. Vaſtly more pernicious to the tender plants than the ſharpeſt knife; they not only kill their branches, but wound the very root. Let not the corn venture far, from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not the fruit-bearing bloſſoms dare to come abroad, from their lodgment in the bark; leſt theſe ſavage, murderous blaſts, deſtroy the hope of the advancing year.

Oh! it is ſeverely cold! Who is ſo hardy, as not to ſhrink at this *exceſſively pinching* weather? Every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue; and the teeth hardly forbear chattering.—

* Job xxxvii. 9.

† This, I ſuppoſe, is the meaning of that figurative expreſſion, uſed by the prophet *Habakkuk*; who, ſpeaking of the *Chaldeans* invading *Judea*, ſays,——*Their faces*, or the incurſions they make, *ſhall ſup up*, ſhall ſwallow greedily, ſhall devour utterly, the inhabitants of the country, and their valuable effects; *as the* keen corroding blaſts of the *eaſt-wind*, deſtroy every green thing in the field. Hab. i. 9.

Ye

Ye that ſit eaſy and joyous, in your commodious apartments, ſolacing yourſelves in the diffuſive warmth of your fire; be mindful of your brethren, in the cheerleſs tenement of poverty. *Their* ſhattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment ſcarcely covers their ſhivering fleſh; while a few faint and dying embers, on the ſqualid hearth, rather mock their wiſhes, than warm their limbs.——While the generous juices of *Oporto*, ſparkle in your glaſſes; or the ſteams, beautifully tinged, and deliciouſly flavoured, by the *Chineſe* leaf, ſmoke in the elegant porcelain: O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidſt all the rigour of theſe inclement ſkies, are emaciated with ſickneſs; benumbed with age; and pining with hunger. Let "their loins "bleſs you," for comfortable cloathing! ſupply them with food, with fewel; and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their diſtreſſes, but only by the hearing of the ear; the ſeeing of the eye; or the feeling of a tender commiſeration!—— Methinks, the bitter, bluſtering winds plead for the poor indigents: may they breathe pity into *your* breaſts! while they blow hardſhips into *their* huts.—— Obſerve thoſe blue flames, and ruddy coals, in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more ſtrongly. Silent, but ſeaſonable admonition to the gay circle, that chat and ſmile around them! *Thus*, may your hearts, at ſuch a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar beneficence! Detain not your ſuperfluous piles of wood. Let them haſten to the relief of the ſtarving family. Bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the ſeverity of the ſeaſon, and chear the bleak abodes of want; ſo ſhall they aſcend, mingled with thankſgivings to GOD, and ardent prayers for your welfare—aſcend, more grateful to heaven, than curling columns of the moſt coſtly incenſe.

Now the winds ceaſe. Having brought their load, they are diſmiſſed from ſervice. They have wafted an immenſe cargo of clouds, which empty themſelves in

ſnow.

ſnow. At firſt, a few ſcattered ſherds come wandering down the ſaddened ſky. This ſlight ſkirmiſh, is ſucceeded by a general onſet. The flakes, large and numerous, and thick-wavering, deſcend in a continual flow. All night, the fleecy ſhowers, in ſofteſt ſilence, fall. In the morning, when we awake, what a ſurpriſing change appears?——Is this the ſame world!——Here is no diverſity of colour! I can hardly diſtinguiſh the trees, from the hills on which they grow. Where is the difference between the grounds, deſtined to the plough: and thoſe, reſerved for paſturage? All things lie blended in bright confuſion. So bright, that it heightens the ſplendor of day, and even dazzles the organs of ſight. The lawn is not ſo fair, as this ſnowy mantle, which inveſts the fields; and even the lily, was the lily to appear, would look tarniſhed in its preſence. I can think but of *one* thing, which *excels*, or equals, this glittering robe of Winter. Is any one deſirous to know what I mean? He may find it deſcribed, in that admirable hymn *, compoſed by the royal penitent. Is any one deſirous to be poſſeſſed of ſo valuable a rarity? He will find it offered to his acceptance, in every page of the goſpel.——See! (for the eye cannot ſatisfy itſelf, without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate ſcene) See! how the hedges are habited, like ſpotleſs veſtals: the houſes are roofed, with uniformity and luſtre: the meadows are covered, with a carpet of the fineſt ermine †: the groves bow beneath the lovely burden: and all, all below, is one wide, immenſe, ſhining waſte of white.

Amazing are the works of the great Creator, and prodigiouſly *various*. How pliant and ductile is nature, under his forming hand! At his command, the ſelf-ſame ſubſtance aſſumes the moſt different ſhapes; and is transformed into an endleſs multiplici-

* Pſal. li. 7. See page 99. 100.

† This animal is milk white; and ſo far is it from having *ſpots*, that, as the tradition goes, it will rather die, or be taken, than ſully its whiteneſs. See Chambers's *Dictionary*.

ty

ty of figures. If HE ordains, the water is *moulded* into hail, and diſcharged upon the earth like a volley of ſhot; or, it is *conſolidated* into ice, and defends the rivers, "as it were with a breaſtplate." At the bare intimation of his will, the very ſame element is ſcattered in hoar-froſt, like a ſprinkling of the moſt *attenuated* aſhes; or, is ſpread over the ſurface of the ground, in theſe ſwelling couches of deep and *flaky* down.

The ſnow, however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a *warm* garment for the corn; ſcreens it from nipping froſts, and cheriſhes its infant-growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting care, and exerciſe a foſtering influence. Then, touched by the ſun, or thawed by a ſoftening gale, the furry veſture melts into genial moiſture; ſinks deep into the ſoil, and ſaturates its pores with the diſſolving nitre; repleniſhing the glebe with that vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of Spring, and ripen into the fruits of Autumn.——Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable repreſentation, of the *efficacy* of the divine word: both in the ſucceſsful, and advantageous iſſue of its operation! "As the rain cometh down, "and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thi-"ther, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring "forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, "and bread to the eater: ſo ſhall my word be, that "goeth forth out of my mouth: it ſhall not return "unto me void, but ſhall accompliſh that which I "pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereunto "I ſent it *."

Nature, at length, puts off her lucid veil. She drops it, in a trickling *thaw*. The looſened ſnow, rolls in ſheets from the houſes. Various openings ſpot the hills; which, even while we look, become larger, and more numerous. The trees rid themſelves, by degrees, of the hoary incumbrance. Shook from the ſpringing boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part

* Iſ. lv. 10. 11.

flies

flies abroad in ſhining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, riſe plain and diſtinct to view.——And ſince we ſee nature once again, has ſhe no verdant traces, no beautiful features, left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and, therefore, the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued.——Here and there the *holly* hangs out her glowing berries; the *lauruſtinus* ſpreads her graceful tufts; and both, under a covert of unfading foliage.——The plain, but hardy *ivy* clothes the decrepit, crazy wall; nor ſhrinks from the friendly office; though the ſkies frown, and the ſtorm roars.——The *laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In ſpite of all the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and froſt, it preſerves an undiſmayed lively look; and maintains its poſt, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquiſhing the rugged force of Winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow.——Nor muſt I forget the *bay-tree;* which ſcorns to be a mean penſioner, on a few ſunny gleams; or, with a ſervile obſequiouſneſs, to vary its appearance, in conformity to the changing ſeaſons. By ſuch indications of ſterling worth, and ſtanch reſolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius; while it weaves the chaplet for his temples.——*Theſe*, and a *few other* plants, clad in native verdure, retain their comely aſpect, in the bleakeſt climes, and coldeſt months.

Such, and ſo durable, are the accompliſhments of a *refined* underſtanding, and an *amiable* temper. The tawdry ornaments of dreſs, which catch the unthinking vulgar, ſoon become inſipid and deſpicable. The rubied lip, and the fluſhing cheek, fade. Even the ſparkling wit *, as well as the ſparkling eye, pleaſe but

* "How little does God eſteem the things that men count great; "the endowments of *wit* and eloquence, that *men* admire in ſome! "alas! how poor are they to him! He reſpecteth not any who are "wiſe in heart: they are nothing, and leſs than nothing, in his "eyes. Even *wiſe* men admire, how little it is that men know; "how ſmall a matter lies under the ſound of theſe popular wonders,

but for a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which ſurvive the decay of every inferior embelliſhment; charms, which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the *permanency* of the *ever-green*.

Such, likewiſe, is the *happineſs* of the *ſincerely religious*; like a tree, ſays the inſpired moraliſt, "whoſe "leaf ſhall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumſtances; but has a fund within, and is "ſatisfied from himſelf *." Even though impoveriſhed by misfortunes, he is rich in the *poſſeſſion* of *grace*, and richer in the *hope* of *glory*. His joys are infinitely ſuperior to, as well as nobly independent on, the tranſitory glow of ſenſual delight, or the capricious favours of, what the world calls, Fortune.

If the *ſnow* compoſes the light-armed troops of the ſky; methinks, the *hail* conſtitutes its heavy artillery. When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuoſity does that ſtony ſhower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the reſounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into ſmoke, or ſcourges them into foam. It cruſhes the infant-flowers; cuts in pieces the gardener's early plants; and batters the feeble fortification of his glaſſes, into

"ders, a learned man, a great ſcholar, a great ſtateſman. How "much more doth the all-wiſe GOD meanly account of theſe! He "often diſcovers, even to the world, their meanneſs. He *befools* "them. So valour, or birth, or worldly greatneſs, theſe he gives, "and gives as things he makes no great reckoning of, to ſuch as "ſhall never ſee his face, and calls to the inheritance of glory poor "deſpiſed creatures, that are looked on as the *off-ſcourings* and *re-* "*fuſe* of the world."

—*Thus*, ſays an excellent author; who writes with the moſt amiable ſpirit of benevolence; with the moſt unaffected air of humility; and, like the ſacred originals, from which he copies, with a majeſtic ſimplicity of ſtyle ——Whoſe *ſelect works*, I may venture to recommend, not only as a treaſure, but as a MINE of genuine, ſterling, evangelical piety.——See page 520 of Archbiſhop LEIGHTON'S *ſelect works*, the *Edinburgh* edition, octavo: which it is neceſſary to ſpecify, becauſe the *London* edition does not contain that part of his writings, which has ſupplied me with the preceding *quotation*.

* PROV. xiv. 14.

ſhiver

ſhivers. It darts into the traveller's face; he turns, with haſte, from the ſtroke; or feels, on his cheek, for the guſhing blood: if he would retreat into the houſe, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined enemy that puſhes the purſuit, daſhes through the crackling panes.—But, the fierce attack is quickly over. The clouds have ſoon ſpent their ſhafts; ſoon unſtrung their bow. How happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that what is ſo dreadfully *furious*, ſhould be ſo remarkably *ſhort!* What elſe could endure the ſhock, or eſcape deſtruction?

But, behold a *bow*, of no hoſtile intention; a bow, painted in variegated colours, on the diſburdened cloud. How vaſt is the extent, how delicate the texture, of that *ſhowery arch!* It compaſſeth the heavens, with a glorious circle: and makes us forget the horrors of the ſtorm. Elegant its form, and rich its tinctures; but more delightful its ſacred ſignificancy. While the violet and the roſe, bluſh in its beautiful aſpect; the olive-branch ſmiles in its gracious import. It writes in radiant dyes, what the angels ſung in harmonious ſtrains; "Peace on earth, and good will "towards men." It is the ſtamp of *inſurance*, for the continued welfare of this preſent world; and a comfortable *token* of a better ſtate, and happier kingdom: —a kingdom, where a *rainbow* is repreſented, as ſurrounding the throne *; to intimate, that *there* ſtorms ſhall beat, and Winter pierce no more; but one unbounded *Spring* for ever, ever bloom.

* Rev. iv. 3.

A

TABLE

OF THE

TEXTS

More or *leſs* illuſtrated in this WORK.

N. B. *As Dr* SHAW, *in his ſupplement to his* excellent *book of Travels, and ſeveral other authors of the* greateſt *eminence, have given an index of ſcriptures, occaſionally explained in their writings; I doubt not, but I ſhall oblige* many *of my readers, by what I* here *ſubjoin; thoſe eſpecially, whoſe taſte is happily formed to reliſh the beauties of the ſacred records.*

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